Issue 54 ● November 1992 ● £2.99

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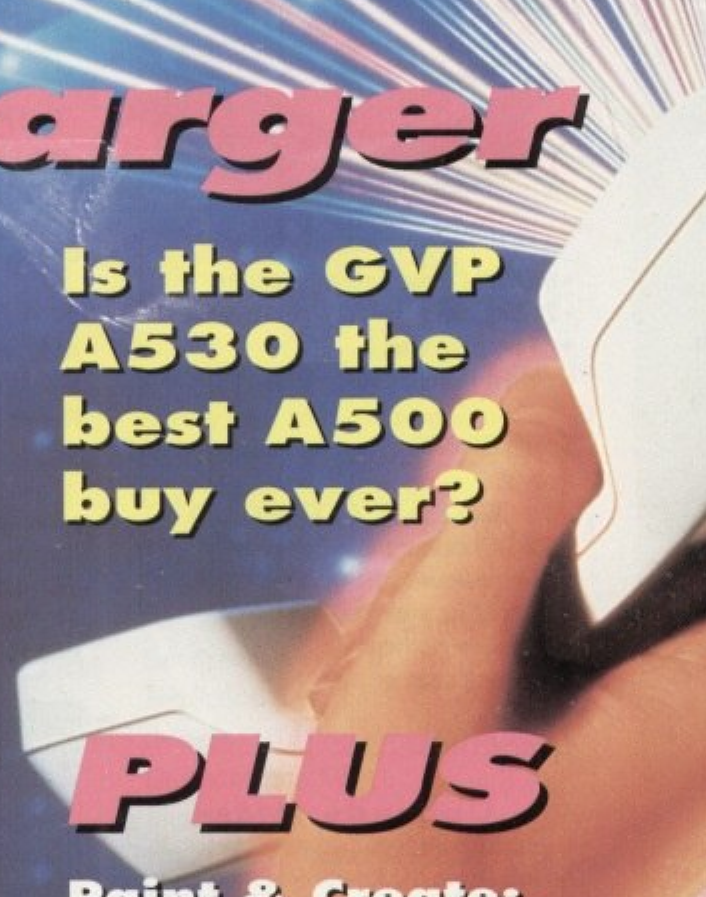
OpalVision ● Amos Pro ● Blizzard Turbo ● Gold Disk Office 2

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New ARexx compiler

GAMER

Lotus III - another dose of motorised mayhem

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Scanners

"If your in the market for a hand scanner then forget the rest and get Powerscan"
Amiga Format July 1992

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GOLD

- 100-400 DPI scanning resolutions
- 64 greyscales
- Thru'port for printer
- Award winning editing, image manipulation & scanning software

Power Scanner v2.0 .... £99
Power Scanner Colour £239

Epson GT-6000

GOLD



- 600 DPI Colour flatbed scanner
- 24-bit colour
- A4 reading area
- Software included

Epson GT-6000 .... £999

Epson GT-8000

- 800 DPI colour flatbed scanner
- 24-bit colour
- A4 reading area
- Software included
- Amazing scan quality

Epson GT-8000 .... £1199

Upgrade Offer

If you consider your scanner system to be inferior to the Power Scanner, we will happily upgrade your software and interface. (Power Scanner is compatible with most scanning heads)

Upgrade £49.95

The Amiga can only display 16 greyscales

Floppy Drives

"This drive contains more gadgets than Batman's utility belt"
Amiga Computing Feb1992

PC880B Power Drive



- Award winning drive manufactured by Power Computing
- Super slim design
- Anti-click (Cures that annoying click)
- Virus blocker (Prevents viruses)
- Built-in backup hardware

PC880B with Blitz Amiga £65
PC880B with Blitz & XCopy £90
PC880B (Cyclone compatible)* £70
PC880B in black case £65

*This drive is only available to registered owners of XCopy Professional. You must provide proof of purchase of XCopy Professional

Power Drives

PC880E Economy drive £49.95
PC881 A500 Internal drive £40.00
PC882 A2000 Internal drive £45.00

Dual Drive

- Two high quality disk drives built into one compact unit
- Same features as PC880B

Dual drive £125

Drive Accessories

A500 Internal anti-click board £9.95
Maxell multi-colour disks (10) £9.95
Floppy disks bulk supplied .... £POA

Blitz Amiga

- Backup disks at lightning speeds
- Stops all external drives from clicking
- Contains anti-virus from being written into the bootblocker

Blitz Amiga £20

RAM Expansion

Blizzard Turbo

- A500/A500+
- Expand up to 8MB (0K installed)
- Memory and 68000 CPU run at 14.28MHz
- Fast 68000 processor installed on-board
- Fully auto-configuring
- Optical 512K shadow RAM on extra memory bank for shadowing the operating system out of ROM or from disk

Blizzard Turbo £169

RAMs continued

A600 Memory Cards



1MB RAM with clock £49.95
1MB RAM without clock £45.00

PC501+ RAM Card

Our RAM board is designed especially for the A500+ computer and comes with 1MB of RAM on board to expand your memory to 2MB of chip RAM. Plug-in and go operation (Fits into the trapdoor)

PC501+ RAM card £39.95

8MB for any A500

- Plugs into side slot, fully auto config, full thru'port. Expand 2MB-8MB

2MB £109 4MB £169 8MB £289
1 x 4ZIP chips £14.95

2MB for any A500

- Economy 2MB RAM externally cased
- 16-chip (1 x 1 DIP)
- No thru'port

2MB RAM £79

1.5MB RAM Board

- Fully supports 1MB of chip RAM
- Fully compatible with Fatter Agnus

(Kickstart 1.3 and above, not compatible with A500+)
(Your Amiga needs to be opened, this may effect your warranty)

1.5MB RAM board £75

1MB with Thru'port

- Expand your A500's memory up to a total of 2MB without disposing of your existing 512K upgrade
- Works with 1MB of Chip RAM

(512K RAM must be 4 chip type or not exceeding 9cm in length)
(Your Amiga needs to be opened, this may effect your Warranty)

1MB with thru'port £45

A500 RAM Card

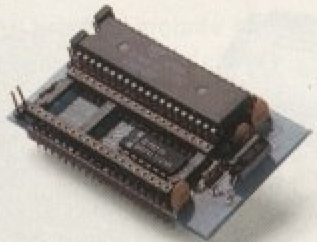
- 512K RAM expansion with clock & free software (A500+ compatible)

512K RAM (4 chip) £29
512KRAM without clock £24
512K RAM (16 chip) with clock £24
512KRAM (16 chip) without clock £19

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- Kick-off is the latest Amiga add-on from Power
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- Kickstart ROM can be selected from the keyboard
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- Simple internal fitting*

* Kick-off requires the lid to be removed from the Amiga. This may invalidate your warranty.

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ROM Share inc. kickstart v2.04	£55
ROM Share inc. kickstart v1.3	£39
ROM Share for A600	£29

Kickstart v2.04

2.04 Kickstart (chip only)	£39.95
2.04 Kickstart ROM, workbench software, install disk 2.04, font disk & extras	£99.95
2.04 kit with ROM sharer	£115.00

Joysticks

- Made by Quickshot
- High quality construction
- Ergonomic Bio-grips
- Turbo-fire capability

Aviator 1

- Aircraft control yoke
- 4 fire buttons
- Turbo fire
- Altitude / level indicator
- The ultimate joystick
- Player 1/2 selector

Aviator 1	£35.00

Intruder 1

- Dual speed turbo fire
- Omnidirectional grip
- Eject button for fire button cover

Intruder 1	£29.99
Maverick 1	£15.99
Python 1	£9.99
Apache 1	£7.99

A500 Hard Drives

GVP A530 Turbo HD



- 40MHz 68030EC accelerator
- Optional 68882 maths co-processor
- Up to 8MB 32-bit FASTRAM on-board
- Award winning

52MB HD 0MB RAM	£714
105MB HD 0MB RAM	£854
240MB HD 0MB RAM	£1054
68882 Upgrade kit	£224

GVP Series 2 HD

- Up to 8MB FASTRAM on board

52QMB 0MB	£339	105QMB 0MB	£469
52QMB 2MB	£389	105QMB 2MB	£519
52QMB 4MB	£440	105QMB 4MB	£569
52QMB 8MB	£519	105QMB 8MB	£709

ICD Novia Internal HD

- Fits inside your Amiga 500
- Comes complete, just plug-in and go

Novia 60I 60MB HD	£359
Novia 85I 85MB HD	£459

ICD Flicker Fixer

Flicker Free Video 2

- Stop that annoying flicker
- Fits internally in the A500
- Multi-sync monitor required

Flicker Free Video 2	£199
NEC 4FG Multi-sync monitor	£549

Chips

4MB x 8SIMM	£90
1MB x 8SIMM	£25
256K x 4DRAM	£4.00
1MB x 1DRAM	£3.95
1 x 4 ZIP	£14.95
1 x 4 DIP	£19.95
A3000 Static column RAM	£19.95
SIMM 32 x 1MB-60	£65
SIM 32 x 4MB-60	£243

(These chips cover most memory & hard drives i.e. GVP, Supra, Commodore)

Commodore A600

- The new compact Amiga 600
- Built-in TV modulator
- Workbench & kickstart 2
- Enhanced chip set
- 1MB of RAM
- IDE Hard disk controller built-in
- Credit card size ROM & RAM slot

A600 with 2MB	£339
A600 with 20MB inc. 2MB	£499
A600 with 40MB inc. 2MB	£539
A600 with 80MB inc. 2MB	£639

See memory section for latest A600 RAM cards

A600 Internal HD

IBM 40MB Internal HD	£299
IBM 80MB Internal HD	£399

Commodore CDTV



- CDTV player
- Welcome disk + caddy
- Keyboard
- Floppy disk drive (black)
- Wired mouse
- Workbench 1.3 and manuals
- Infrared remote control

CDTV multi-media pack	£599

CDTV Software

A Bun for Barney	£29.99
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Fun School (5-7yrs)	£24.99
Fun School (Over 7yrs)	£24.99
Guiness CDTV Disc of Records	£34.99
Illustrated Holy Bible	£29.99
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NASA Heroic Age of Space	£19.99
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Power Scanner **Amiga Format Gold**

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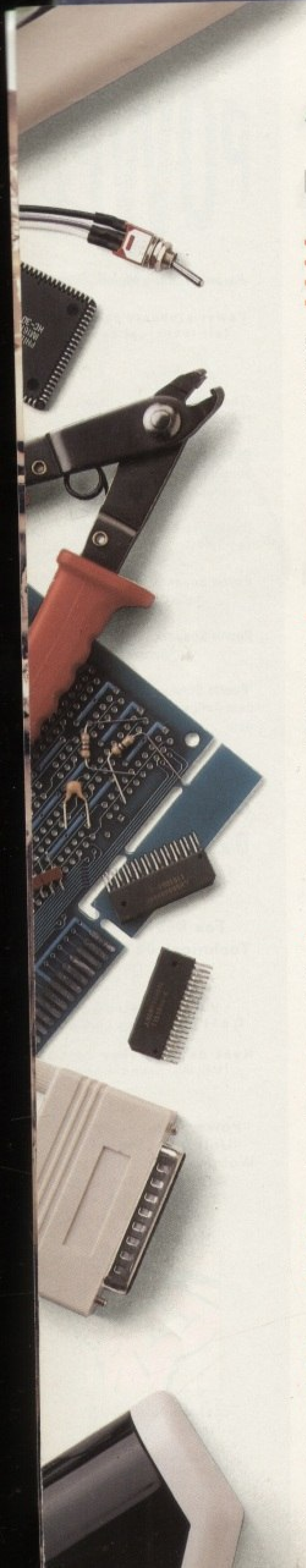
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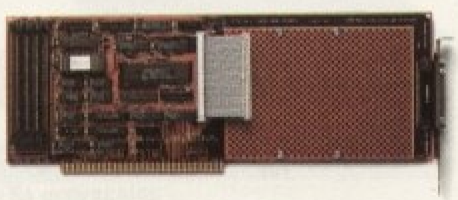
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A2000 Hard Cards

GVP Series 2 HD
- Up to 8Mb SIMM RAM on-board
- Supports external SCSI devices
- FaaaST ROM 4.0
- 14MHz SCSI controller

52QMB 0MB	£279	105QMB 0MB	£479
52QMB 2MB	£339	105QMB 2MB	£539
52QMB 4MB	£399	105QMB 4MB	£599
52QMB 8MB	£469	105QMB 8MB	£749

Nexus Hard Card



- Up to 8MB RAM on-board

Bare £199

52QMB 0MB	£279	105QMB 0MB	£479
52QMB 2MB	£339	105QMB 2MB	£539
52QMB 4MB	£399	105QMB 4MB	£599
52QMB 8MB	£469	105QMB 8MB	£749

Bare SCSI Hard Drive

52 Quantum ..£199 105 Quantum £299

(Suitable for GVP G-Force, GVP HD or Nexus HC)
Other sizes of HD available, please call

RAM Expansion
- Aries A1500 / A2000 RAM

2MB .... £129 6MB £209
4MB .... £169 8MB £249

Macintosh Emulator

"This really is the best emulator we've seen for the Amiga. It behaves just as if you really were using a Mac"
Amiga Format Sept 1992

AMax-II Plus
- Amiga 1500 and above
- Runs Mac software
- Runs System 7
- Full support for all SCSI Mac peripherals and the ability to read Mac disks in your drives
- 68020/68030 compatible
- AppleTalk emulation
- Can use Amiga ECS
- Easy to install

AMax-II Plus £299
(Mac ROM chips required)

24-Bit Colour

OpalVision
- 24-bit graphic card
- 16.8 million colours available
- Operates in all standard Amiga resolutions
- VLSI Microcode graphics co-processor
- Double buffered 24-bit and 15-bit animation is available in all resolutions
- 'Palatte-mapped' design updates screen colours in real-time. Fade pictures in and out and change their palettes
- Equipped with 1.5MB of display RAM
- Auto-config for NTSC or PAL
- Available for all Amigas

Software included

OpalPaint
- 24-bit painting and image processing

OpalPresents
- Presentation program
- Control OpalVision images, Amiga graphics and live video
- Includes fades, effects etc.
- Many more features

King of Karate
- 24-bit computer game
- Exciting karate competition
- Demonstrates OpalVision capabilities

OpalVision £899
More information available
OpalVision roaster chip available soon

Monitors

"For a monitor of this quality, the CM8833 is worth every penny"
Amiga Format Sept 1992

"The 4FG is an absolutely smashing monitor that beats every competitor"
Amiga Format Sept 1992

Philips CM8833 Mk2
- With cable
- Available with Lotus Turbo Challenge 2 or F19 Stealth Fighter
- On-site maintenance

CM8833 Mk2 .... £199

NEC Multisync 4FG
- For use with Flicker Fixers
- Very high quality
- Built-in degausser

NEC Multisync 4FG £549

Optical Hard Drive



- Manufactured by Power Computing
- 128MB on one optical disk
- Read and write optical disks
- 40ms running speed
- Built-in power supply
- High power cooling fan
- 25-way and 50-way SCSI ports
- Thru'port built-in
- SCSI ID switch
- Compatible with major SCSI controllers

128MB optical drive (Internal) £729
128MB optical drive (External) £999
128MB 3.5" optical disk .... £39.95 each
SCSI controller card
for A1500 / A2000 .... £199
(Compatible with Amiga, PC, and Mac. A SCSI controller is required on the Amiga and PC)

Commodore A1500
- 1MB of RAM
- Two 3.5 internal disk drives
- Fully expandable, accepting all A2000 peripherals
- Keyboard and mouse
- Software included
  The Works Platinum Edition
  Delux Paint III
  Home Accounts
  Puzznic game
  Toki game
  Elf game

A1500 .... £599

Accelerator

GVP G-Force
- 68030 accelerator board
- 68882 Maths co-processor
- DMA SCSI controller on-board
- 68000 fall-back mode
- Only CPU slot is used
- Internal and external SCSI connector
- Converts to hard card with Hard Drive mount kit
- 32-bit RAM as standard

25MHz 1MB RAM £579
40MHz 4MB RAM £879
50MHz 4MB RAM £1249
Hard drive mount kit £35

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Printers

All printers include cables and next day delivery

Star Printers

LC200 colour £199
LC24-200 mono £239
LC24-200 colour £289

Citizen Printer

Swift 24e £279
(includes colour kit and AMI)

Epson Printers

Laser

EPL 4000

- Ideal 'First time" Laser printer
- Print speed of 6ppm
- Print superb quality text and graphics
- Ideal upgrade from dot-matrix

EPL-4000 .... £639

EPL 4300

- High quality laser printer
- Print speed of 6ppm
- 1MB memory
- Expand to 6MB
- Adobe postscript option
- 100 sheet tray

EPL-4300 .... £799

EPL-8100



- Prints speed of 10ppm
- 1MB memory expandable to 6MB
- Microsoft printing
- Ritech
- 27 font
- 250 sheet papertray
- Adobe postscript option
- Intelligent/Remote emulation switching
- Parallel/Serial interface
- Networking capabilities
- Can serve 2-3 users
- Shared printing

EPL-8100 .... £1349

Inkjet

SQ-870



- New generation inkjet
- Advanced paper handling
- Print scalable fonts
- 660cps print speed
- 360 x 360 DPI print quality
- 128K printer buffer
- Handles four paper types

SQ-870 .... £509
SQ-1170 .... £629
(132 column printer)

Dot Matrix

LQ570

- Four feed paths
- Flexible paper management
- 225cps print speed
- Easy access control panel
- Memory stores around 4 full pages of text
- Print text and graphics
- Optional sheet feeders
- Optional tractor feeder

LQ-570 .... £289
LQ-1070 .... £449
(132 column printer)

LQ-100



- 24-pin
- 250cps print speed
- Space saving
- Scalable fonts
- Enhanced graphics
- 50 sheet A4 paper tray
- Dual position design
- Optional tractor feed
- LQ-100 fits in anywhere!

LQ-100 .... £209

Dot Matrix Cont.

LX-100

- 9-pin
- 240 cps in cpi draft mode
- Built-in 50 sheet paper cassette
- 1 draft and 2 NLQ fonts built-in
- No adjustment for thickness required
- Two printer positions - upright or flat
- Tractor feed
- Cut sheet feeder
- Cables

LX100 .... £189

Modems

Supra Modems

Supra Fax Modem V32 Bis

"It's not everyday you find a modem with the features it has at this price - you could pay over twice the price for just a modem this speed alone, without the fax facilities

Amiga Format Sept 1992

GOLD

- High quality
- Award winning
- High spec

Supra Fax Modem Plus £136
Supra Fax Modem v32Bis £295
Supra Modem 2400 (External) £91
Supra Modem 2400 ZIplus (Internal) .. £134
Supra 9600 .... £POA

Miscellaneous



Power Mouse £15
Optical Mouse £29.95
Replacement optical mouse mat .. £9.95
10 Maxell disks, optical mouse, Zipstick £45
Maxell multi-colour disks (10) £9.95
Floppy disks bulk .... £POA

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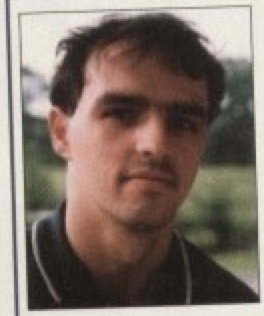
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Welcome to another issue of Britain's best Amiga magazine. Does that sound pompous? It probably does, but a quick look at the contents of this issue will confirm our continuing policy of offering the only complete coverage of the whole Amiga market.

For the ambitious owner, we have a first look at GVP's exciting new A530 unit, there's Amos Pro (another first) for budding programmers, OpalVision for the graphic artists out there, Blizzard Turbo for the budget-conscious user with an eye on acceleration, Gold Disk Office 2 for the home and small business productivity fiends, Paint & Create for parents with educational interests, structured drawing packages, and a full-blown comms special for beginners everywhere.

Top this off with another great CoverDisk, another instalment of our beginners' series, the latest games in *Gamer*, *Amiga Market* for buyers, and two competitions instead of the usual one, and we think you'll agree there's something for everyone.

Remember our motto – when you buy this mag, no other purchase is necessary. Everything you need can be found in one magazine - *Amiga Computing*.

Stevie

WHO'S WHO

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For four years *Amiga Computing* has been the leading magazine for Amiga enthusiasts. As a key member of the Europress magazine group, *Amiga Computing* promises to inform, educate and entertain its readers each month with the most dedicated coverage of the Amiga available.

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REGULARS

Competition 1



Organise your finances and save money with our £1,000 Home Accounts 2 spectacular

See page 53

Competition 2



Turn your home into an office by winning a copy of Gold Disk Office 2

See page 55

AMIGA MARKET

Try out our classified ads for those tempting bargains. There's also the usual Shop Window reviews, and this month we have the first ever survey of mail order service.

Turn to page 155

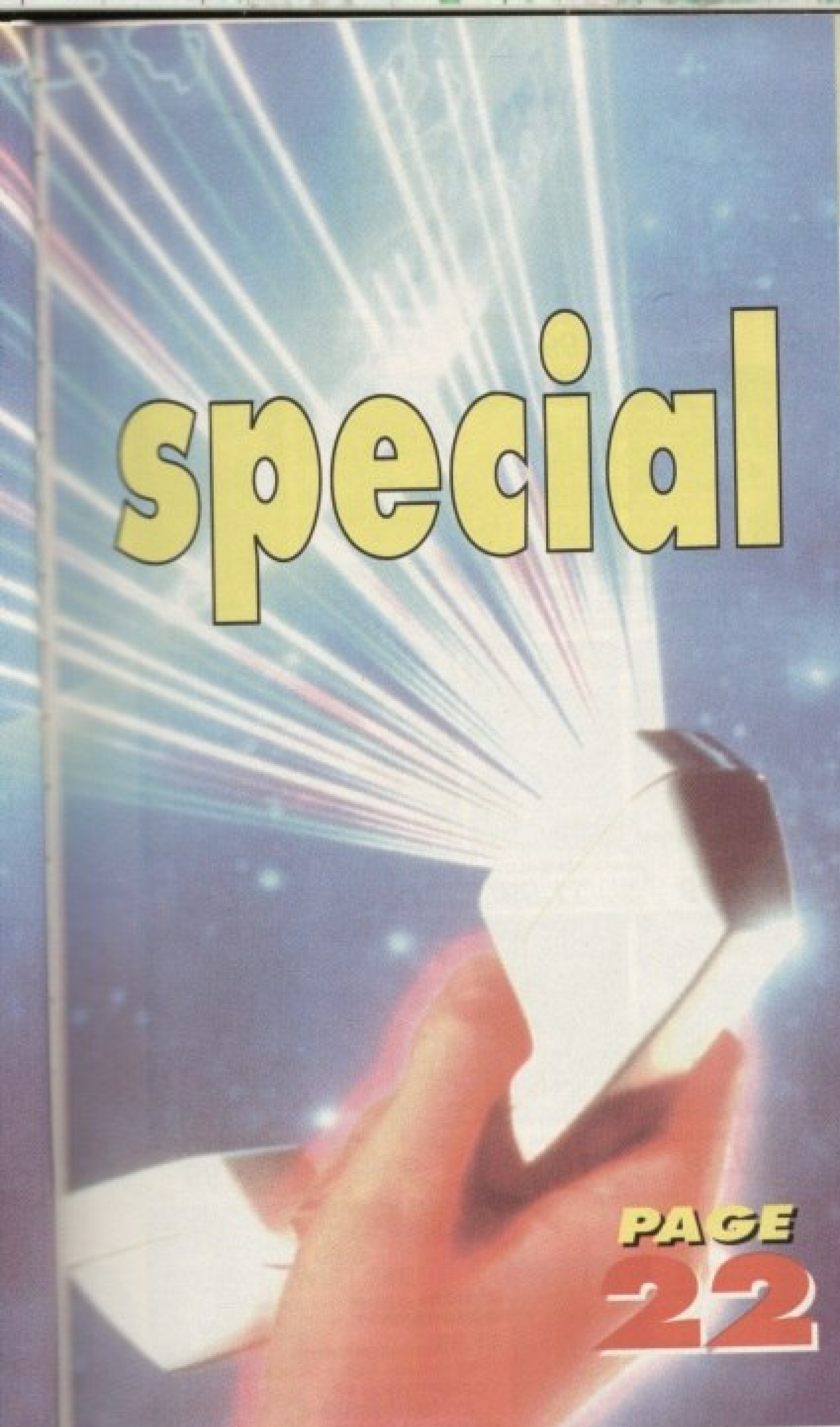


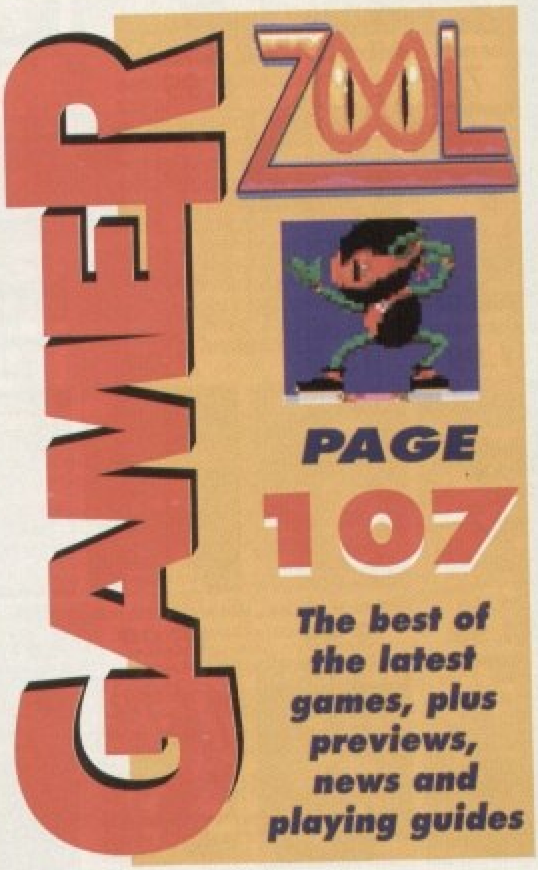
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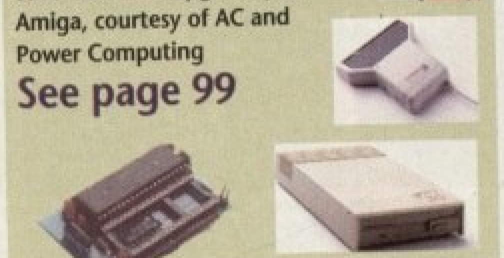


Offers



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See page 99



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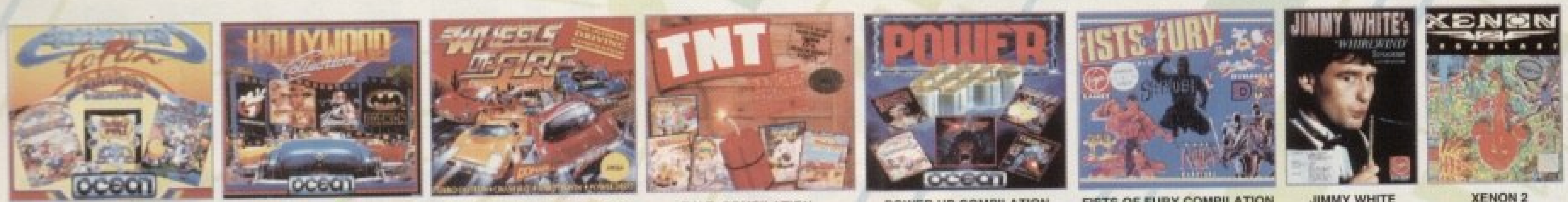


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Create your own rendered 3D objects and animations

ImageLab
Take a perfectly normal graphic, then apply ImageLab for some stunning effects

Tame
For games programmers everywhere, a complete high quality map editor

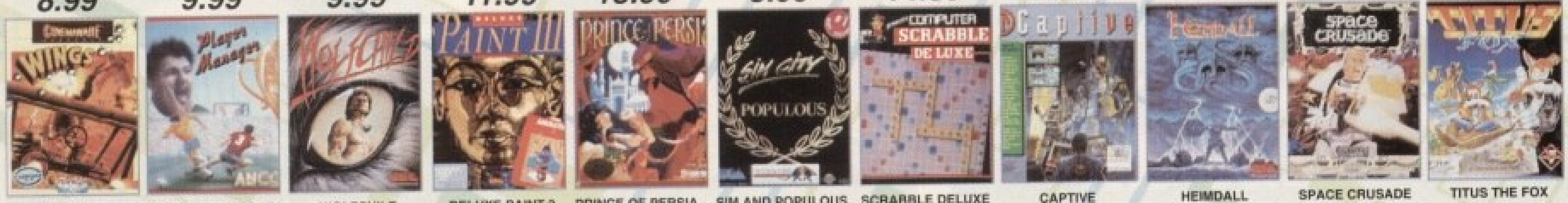
Canon BJ10 Utils
The end of your bubblejet blues is nigh with this custom printer driver and utilities (WB2 needed for full effect)



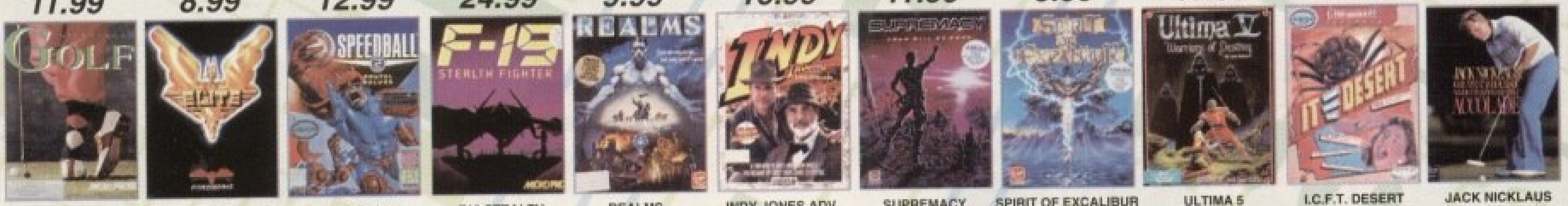
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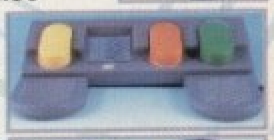

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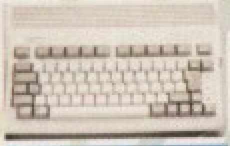
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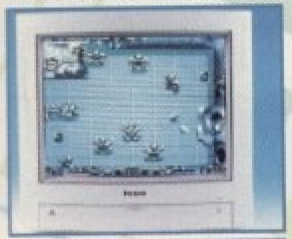
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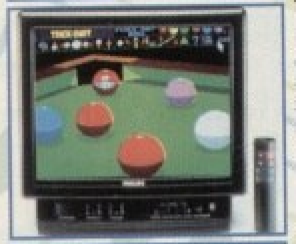


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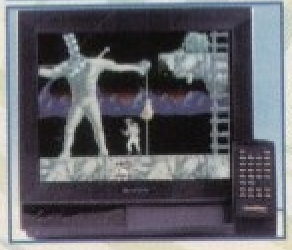


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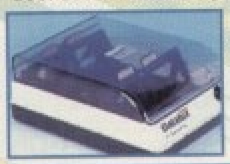




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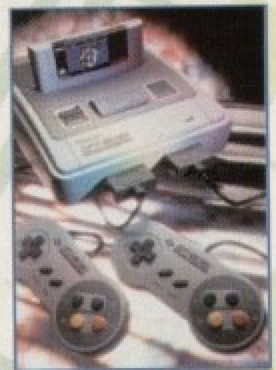
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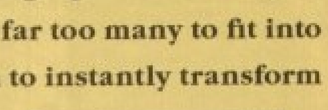
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From Commodore



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AMIGA COMPUTING NEWSLINE AMIGA COMPUTING

by John Butters

Christmas is Wild, Weird and Wicked

TWO bundles which Commodore say will take the A600 through Christmas and most of next year have been unveiled by the firm, and should now be available.

Containing a standard A600, The Wild, The Weird and The Wicked pack is aimed as a replacement for Cartoon Classics and, for more "serious" buyers, Epic/Language Lab is based on the A600HD fitted with a 20Mb hard disk drive.

Supplied in The Wild, The Weird and The Wicked are Deluxe Paint III and three games – Microprose's Grand Prix, System 3's Putty and Push Over, the recent Ocean game featuring Quavers crisps' Colin Curly. The pack sells for £349.99.

Included in Epic/Language Lab are Deluxe Paint III, Amiga Text wordprocessor and Domark's Trivial Pursuit, presented in either English, French or German. Help is available through a built-in 75,000 word multilingual dictionary.

Three games in the bundle are Ocean's 3D space shoot-'em–up Epic, Rome – Millenium's strategy set in the days of the Roman empire and Myth, an arcade adventure from System 3. Price:



Latest Amiga bundles: The Wild, The Weird & The Wicked and Epic/Language Lab

£499.99. "Our Christmas bundles are always eagerly awaited and this year has been no exception," said Commodore boss Kelly Sumner.

"It's always hard to better your last success, but we're sure that we've pulled it off on this occasion by offering a selection to suit every taste."

The company say that with the introduction of their new bundles, less emphasis will be put on the basic £299.99 A600 pack.

Failed firm keeps on repairing Amigas

COMMODORE say service and support of Amiga products will not be affected by Wang's recent decision to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in the United States.

The move gives the computer giant court protection from creditors while they restructure, and they have told Commodore that their service organisation will continue to operate.

Wang took over Amiga repairs soon after the collapse of Commodore national repair centre FMG in June and have always been responsible for A600 on-site warranty.

"All the news and excitement about Wang relates solely to the American parent company," claimed Commodore UK's managing director Kelly Sumner.

"Our position in the UK is totally unaffected. I'm completely comfortable with the situation particularly the at-home support for the Amiga 600."

Wang chairman Richard Miller said: "Our aim is to focus on the service business and the development and sale of software, and to shrink manufacturing operations."

Miller aims to turn Wang into a smaller, more competitive company.

Light shines from Phoenix

A COMPLETE lighting control and design console which fits inside Amigas is being sold by Australian firm Phoenix MicroTechnologies.

Named Aladdin Lighting Control System, it consists of a standard Amiga expansion slot card and software and is available in several configurations to suit the different users' needs.

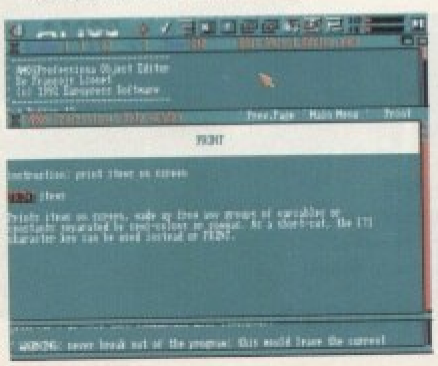
Phoenix are at 18 Hampton Road, Keswick, South Australia 5035.

Amos – more packed in

AMOS Professional is the latest version of Europress Software's (0625 859333) Amiga software development package, updated with many new features following feedback from existing users.

Added are 200 commands to take the total to more than 700, a new editor to give on-line help, new accessories and two example disks containing working example and tutorials.

A selection of completed games are bundled in the pack including scrolling shoot-'em-up Planet Zybex, File O'Facts electronic data organiser, puzzle game Quatro and a platform game with eight-way scrolling.



Available now, it is supplied on six disks and costs £69.99. Upgrades from Amos and Easy Amos are offered to registered users.

More commands, accessories and an improved editor go into Amos Professional

CD-ROM to go internal

OFFICIALS from Commodore's Maidenhead office have confirmed that the giant are developing an internal CD-ROM drive for Amigas with remote keyboards. No details are being given on availability or pricing.

A4000 now due October, A2200 scrapped

BOSSES at Commodore have spoken more about the new A4000, as its launch date is put back to the end of October.

The firm have confirmed the machine will run from a 68040 processor but now say that it will not be available optionally with a 68030.

It will be available with either a 52 or 105Mb hard drive and feature the new AA chip set, giving the machine spectacular graphics.

But Commodore's Kelly Sumner says the A4000 has the usual sound capability. Speculation within the industry suggested the computer would have 16-bit sound.

The computer is claimed to be downwardly compatible and at the moment is housed in a PC case, slightly smaller than the A3000. And in a shock move, Commodore have scrapped the machine intended to take over as a mid-range Amiga, just weeks before it was due to be shown in Britain.

Powered by a 68020 processor, the A2200 would have filled the gap left when the manufacturer stopped production of the A1500 and A2000.

Commodore boss Kelly Sumner expects that after its recent price cut, the A3000 can fill this role.

Meanwhile, a well-placed source has told *Amiga Computing* that Commodore will show a new Amiga aimed at competing against Atari's new £499 Falcon in October.

Commodore, however, insist that it will be next year before such an Amiga arrives. They will not give any clues to its specifications.

Cut sends sales soaring

COMMODORE claim Amiga sales have increased four-fold following since the A600's recent £100 price cut.

The company say that one High Street chain which promoted the machine heavily reported a seven fold increase in sales over the previous week.

Commodore say many independent retailers are now trying to switch sell Nintendo and Sega potential purchases to Amiga, pointing out that while the Amiga still costs £100 more, Amiga software is much cheaper.

"It seems to be working and the dealers and the High Street have certainly got behind it," said Commodore's Kelly Sumner.

"It's too early to say what that means to the overall picture for the year but it certainly means our 300,000 forecast will be achieved – how many more we can't base three weeks sales on."

Irvine gets Amiga plant

MANUFACTURING and assembly of Amigas for Britain and many parts of Europe has moved to Irvine, Scotland, securing more than 200 jobs at the 130,000 square foot plant.

All Amiga models will be built at the factory, which is owned by an American associate company of Commodore's called SCI. The company also produce Amigas in the Far East.

"It's basically endorsing our belief in what the Amiga market is going to be and what it is at the moment,' said Commodore boss Kelly Sumner.

He added: "It's not easy and it's not cheap to set up a production plant."

Bruce Armstrong, SCI's senior vice president for Europe said: "Irvine, our European headquarters, is central in our plans for growth. This contract from Commodore reinforces all the hard work and dedication put in by everyone concerned."

Board goes 3D

REAL 3D now features as part of Amiga Swapshop bulletin board. It contains a message and file area and competitions. Modem users should dial 081-986 5964, at up to 14,400 baud and 8 N 1.

Merlin teaches maths

MATHS can now be learned with six educational games making up Europress Software's (0625 859333) latest package, Merlin's Maths.

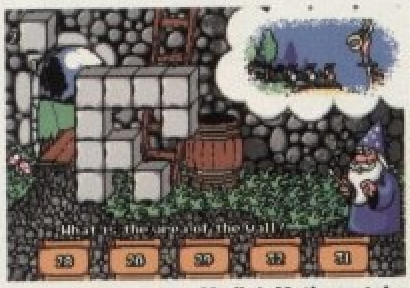
Designed to encourage kids to learn the basics of counting, decimals, fractions and volumes, it retains the fun element common to Europress' Fun School series.

Among the line-up of programs – each with three levels – are Crystal Conference, Perfect Potions, Decisive Data, Broken Battlements, Magic Machine and Weight Weapons.

"Maths can be one of the most difficult subjects to get to grips with, and we believe Merlin's Maths will help to make it easier for children to understand," said Europress Software's marketing manager Alexa Czechowski.

"We have combined the essentials of playability, strong graphics, bright colours, attention-grabbing sound and rewarding sequences to keep the child amused while learning."

Aimed at seven to 11-year-olds, it costs £25.99.



Merlin's Maths contains six educational games

Safari go CGFont

EM Computergraphic (0255 431389) have just signed a deal to distribute Gold Disk's CGUpdate utility with Computer Safari fonts.

The program updates the CGFont directory, allowing Professional Page users to use any new CGFonts that have been added to the CGFont list.

For the first time the entire range of the Computer Safari fonts are available in CGFont format. They are compatible with Professional Page, Pagesetter II, Wordworth and Scala. The price of disks ranges from £7.99 to £12.99.

Publishing from Paris

TWO desktop publishing titles including a low-cost package for designing newsletters and mailshots are due for imminent release by the Paris-based Disc Company (010 33 1 49109995).

Among The Publisher's features are magnification from 30 to 300 per cent, page sizes up to 20in x 20in and mirrored text and graphics.

The mono program supports Macintosh and PC PostScript fonts, type sizes up to 2,000 point, and a PostScript printer driver. It needs 1.5Mb of memory and two disk drives.

Howard Marks, The Disc Company's managing director, said: "This is a first for the Amiga market because up to now users had to pay in excess of £150 to get a decent DTP package."

Meanwhile, The Publisher Colourpro uses full colour to create colour publications. Special features are Apex colour separation and 1.4 million fractal PostScript backgrounds.

The Publisher costs £49.99 and The Publisher Colourpro £149.99, from many dealers.

Comet play on Gamesmaster

ELECTRICAL retail giant Comet are the latest High Street chain to stock computer games, with software due to enter more than 200 of their branches throughout Britain.

Comet's Gamesmaster Zone is billed as a unique concept that will enable Amiga and video game enthusiasts to play before they pay.

Linked with Gamesmaster, Channel 4's computer and video games programme, the Zone has been created in a Gamesmaster-style to create an atmosphere which fans can relate to.

Staff have been trained to deal with software and discount cards will give regular customers price benefits. HMV and Our Price have also announced they intend to sell computer games.

Meanwhile, Comet have announced plans to place the CDTV in 220 of their stores. Commodore's new decision to link the machine with the Amiga is behind the move.



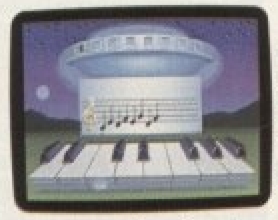
Gamesmaster Zone heads for Comet

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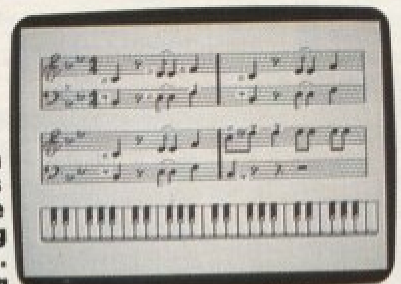
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GOLDEN IMAGE NAKSHA ABACUS SEGA DIGITA PANASONIC JVC MITSUBISHI EPSON CANON TOSHIBA HEWLETT PACKARD GOLDSTAR ZYDEC

COMMODORE ATARI CITIZEN STAR AMSTRAD CUMANA PHILIPS GOLDEN IMAGE NAKSHA ABACUS SEGA DIGITA

GOLDEN IMAGE NAKSHA ABACUS SEGA DIGITA PANASONIC JVC MITSUBISHI EPSON CANON TOSHIBA HEWLETT PACKARD GOLDSTAR ZYDEC

Library closes during probe

WITH one Atari ST public domain library already closed, Amiga outlets are this month waiting to see if trading standards officers will rule sound and product demonstration disks illegal.

In a bid to assist them with their investigation into alleged copyright infringement, Dorset Trading Standards officers seized disks from South West Software Library in February.

The investigations have not been concluded but if the disks are found to breach copyright, Amiga libraries could be told to remove similar disks from their catalogues.

Demonstration disks are popular among public domain buyers and a ban on their distribution could lead to financial crisis for many libraries.

"My wife and I ran the library as a hobby, and a hobby should be fun. Unfortunately, this is no longer true," said SWSL's proprietor Martyn Dryden.

Irvine gets Amiga plant

MANUFACTURING and assembly of Amigas for Britain and many parts of Europe has moved to Irvine, Scotland, securing more than 200 jobs at the 130,000 square foot plant.

All Amiga models will be built at the factory, which is owned by an American associate company of Commodore's called SCI. The company also produce Amigas in the Far East.

"It's basically endorsing our belief in what the Amiga market is going to be and what it is at the moment," said Commodore boss Kelly Sumner.

He added: "It's not easy and it's not cheap to set up a production plant."

Bruce Armstrong, SCI's senior vice president for Europe said: "Irvine, our European headquarters, is central in our plans for growth.

"This contract from Commodore reinforces all the hard work and dedication put in by everyone concerned."

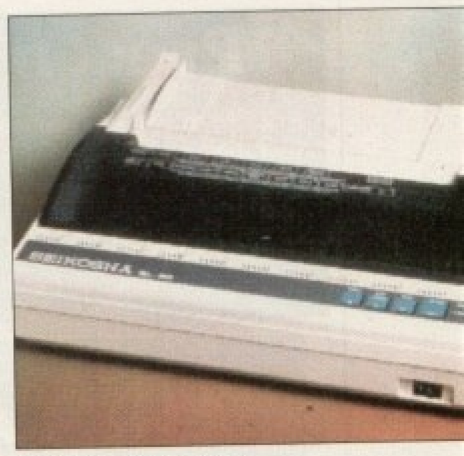
Cheaper CD games coming?

WHEN Sensible Soccer is released for the CDTV this winter its price will be £19.99, £5 cheaper than the Amiga floppy disk-based versions.

The announcement adds weight to recent Commodore claims that compact disc games will become cheaper than equivalent programs on floppy disk.

Renegade's Tom Watdon said: "We hope to release Sensible Soccer CD at £19.99. This is to give potential buyers a clear indication that the possible benefits of a CD drive go beyond sheer memory."

Kelly Sumner, head of Commodore UK, says he hopes for CD games to cost between £11 and £14 in a couple of years time.



A low cost, 24-pin printer arrives from Seikosha

Seikosha hope for best seller

PRINTER giant Seikosha have launched a new low cost 24-pin model for the home user, small business and education markets which the firm believe will become a best seller within months.

With a recommended price of £239, the SL-90 prints at up to 240 characters per second in draft mode, and it has a graphics resolution of 360 x 360 dots per inch.

It comes with a 20k buffer and two fonts – seven more can be bought as extras on font cards at £22 each. A variety of typestyles and attributes are available for each font.

Top driving utilities from Moonlighter

MOONLIGHTER Software Development have launched Ami-Back Tools, an Amiga disk utilities program designed to keep floppy and hard disk drives in top condition.

Among its line-up of features are a disk optimiser that ensures data is stored as efficiently as possible and a utility that examines disks for problems and repairs them if needed.

A recovery program can be used for retrieving deleted files and data from crashed disks, a wipe utility to clear disks of their contents and Lab Test will check and compare checksums for file corruption and virus protection.

"Amiga users have been clamouring for a professional disk utilities package with the same high quality of Ami-Back," said Gary Holland, President of Moonlighter Software Development.

"Ami-Back Tools is our answer to all these users, and we are certain they will find this package unmatched by any other utilities package available for the Amiga," he said.

Moonlighter are at 3208 C East Colonial Drive, Suite 204, Orlando, Florida 32803 and can be telephoned on 010 1 407 384 9484. Ami-Back Tools costs US$79.95.

Planets put on screen

SIMULATING a planetarium on Amigas is Voyager v1.1, an astronomy program which its developer Carina Software (010 1 510 352 7332) claim provides years of wonder and discovery.

It creates a sky of stars, planets, galaxies and constellations and animates motions of the planets.

Each can be explored through an intuitive interface.

Its database of more than 30,000 objects can be extended to a total of about 250,000, and already the program is being used in hundreds of universities and schools.

Version 1.1 of the software contains PAL, overscan and pictures of astronomical objects displayed within the program. Requiring two disk drives it costs £89.99 from UK supplier HB Marketing (0753 686000).

Information displayed by chart

FORTY-FIVE types of charts can be displayed on Amigas to communicate information in a new package from the United States.

Charts & Graphs contains line, column, bar, pie and text charts which can be combined to produce compound charts and shown in 2D or 3D.

Information can be imported from spreadsheets and output to printers, saved as PostScript files or IFF images. Charts can be loaded into desktop publishing and wordprocessing software.

A spokesman for developer Technical Resource Systems Laboratory said: "It was designed to provide Amiga users with a sophisticated, modestly-priced package.

"The key considerations in the design of this software were providing the user with flexibility in the design of charts and taking advantage of the Amiga's capabilities in handling images."

In Britain it costs £69.95 from HB Marketing (0753 686000).

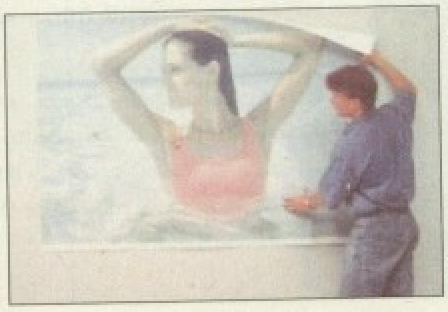
ASDG print in 24-bit

A NEW standalone utility from ASDG outputs 24-bit plane colour or 8-bit plane greyscale images on Preferences supported printers.

TruePrint/24 can produce prints with 16 million colours on most Preferences supported colour printers without the need for custom drivers. It can also print 256 shades of grey on black and white printers such as lasers.

It provides 11 dithering and halftone techniques, including traditional and artistic methods.

TruePrint/24 sells for $89 from ASDG, who can be telephoned on 010 1 68 273 6585,



ASDG utility prints 24-bit colour

Help arrives for WB2 novices

WORKBENCH 2 novices can now learn about the latest Amiga operating system by reading *Mastering Workbench 2*, a new book from Bruce Smith Books (0923 894355).

Opening chapters assume the reader has no knowledge of computing and towards the end of the 328-page book readers will be familiar with sophisticated techniques. Price: £19.95.

Presentation courses for London

A SERIES of two to three-day courses in Amiga-based presentation and interactive media design will be held in London during October.

Subjects covered are Introduction to Interactive Multimedia Design, Practical Techniques of Interactive Multimedia Design, Art of Presentation and Presentation Graphics for the Designer.

Each delegate will have their own A3000 and GVP IV24 workstation, and no previous knowledge of the Amiga is required. For more information call The London Institute (Professional Development Unit) on 071-793 0077.

ADPro reads video streams

ADPro owners can now read and write video streams using the same file format and hardware used on Abekas digital disk recorders.

Enabling digital video images stored on 8mm cartridge tapes to be exchanged between the Amiga and Abekas A60, A65 and A66 systems, the capability makes the Amiga appealing for professional videographers doing hi-end video work.

Videographers who do not own an Abekas system but do own an Amiga can create digital video streams – treating the 8mm tape drive as a single frame recorder – which can be used by an Abekas-equipped post production facility.

It requires a Commodore SCSI disk controller and an Exabyte tape drive. Silica Systems (081-309 1111) are the UK supplier of ADPro.

Game drivers get improved control



Logical steering for games

PEOPLE who play driving and flying games can now use Freewheel, a new steering wheel controller from Logic 3 (081-902 2211). Available before Christmas, it will cost £29.99.

Selling and buying made easy

A SERVICE just set up aims to help people wanting to buy or sell second-hand computer equipment by providing a central contact point.

The National Second-hand Computer Exchange Service will take a list of hardware and software for sale and list it onto their books – bought by people looking to buy products for 50p.

Buyers send money to the firm, sellers send equipment and then the money and equipment are forwarded to their new owners. The cost for selling is £5 per system.

NSCES are at Dept AMC1, 8 Apsley Road, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 2HG. They ask for an sae from anyone requiring more information.

Monitor drops below £200

PHILIPS have cut the cost of their CM8833/II colour monitor to a new recommended price of £199.99.

The firm say the £30 drop is aimed as an incentive for Amiga users to upgrade from a shared television to a dedicated monitor.

Date for education

EMAP Exhibitions have announced that BETT '93, the leading educational IT event with more than 200 companies due to attend, will be held on January 20 to 23 at Olympia, London.

Games swap shop opens

GAMES players can now revitalise their collection by swapping their unwanted titles with other Amiga owners through a new Berkshire firm.

All games sent must be originals and supplied with full documentation. It costs £16 to enrol and each exchange costs £2.75.

For more information write to The Software Exchange, PO Box 19, Newbury RG13 1XU. Telephone 0635 33680

System makes CD accessible

AIMING to make Amiga CD-based software accessible to developers is a new hardware and software package from Clarinet Systems (0276 600398).

Using the system, developers can produce "check discs" on site, and it is claimed the system pays for itself after the first dozen or so discs have been pressed in-house.

Commodore's Jim Mackonochie, general manager of CDTV development for Europe, said that before the launch of Clarinet's system, pre-production test discs cost about £500 each. The system costs £5,581.25.

Music trade accepts Amiga

ZONE Distribution (071-738 5444) are this month claiming that the music trade has accepted the Amiga and Dr T's KCS 3.5 sequencer as a successor to the Atari ST.

The company say growing numbers of enquiries have led to several retailers entering the Amiga market including Music Village, Rockbottom and Brixton Exchange Mart.

Do you know something we don't?

Although *Amiga Computing* has scores of contacts in the Amiga world, we need you. If you have some hot news ring John Butters on the news desk now on 0625 878888 or fax to 0625 879966.

All information supplied will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

DIARY DATES

5 to 8 November 1992
The Future Entertainment Show
(0225 442244)
Venue: Earls Court 1, London
Plenty of Amiga support, including a major presence from Commodore.

19 to 22 November 1992
Christmas Computer Shopper Show
Organiser: Blenheim PEL
(081-742 2828)
Venue: Olympia, London
Promised to attract a few Amiga exhibitors.

4 to 5 December 1992
Gamesmaster Live
Organiser: EMAP (0234 212988)
Venue: NEC, Birmingham
A big games show with TV coverage.

OVERSEAS

8 to 11 October 1992
Computer Shopper Show
Organiser: AMI Shows Europe
(010 49 2234 22021)
Venue: Koln Messe, Cologne
A chance to catch up on the year's developments in the active Amiga world. Formerly Amiga Koln.

4 to 8 November 1992
Supergames Show '92
Organiser: (010 33 148445253)
Venue: CNIT, Paris
See the latest leisure software for the Amiga

26 to 29 November 1992
World of Commodore '92
Organiser: Fairs & Fun
(010 49 8106 34094)
Venue: Frankfurt Exhibition Halls
The main Commodore show in Germany. 100,000 visitors expected.

● If your company is organising a show relevant to the Amiga and it's not listed, let us know so we can include the information in the diary.

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A4000 unveiled

Whats New USA

Denny Atkin reports on the latest developments at the hottest Amiga show in the USA

The World of Commodore Amiga show, held in Pasadena, California, was the most upbeat Amiga show I'd ever attended.

Here in the US, it seemed as if each Amiga show was just a little more depressing than the previous one.

No more. This show set a new standard for excitement in the Amiga market – even the Comdex where they introduced the Amiga 500 and 2000 didn't generate this much excitement. Both Commodore and its third-party developers amazed the attendees with some truly exciting new products.

Impressive

Commodore unveiled the Amiga 4000 to an excited public. The specifications don't match many of the rumours you've seen in the press over the past year, but they're quite impressive nevertheless.

The A4000 is based around a 25MHz 68040 microprocessor, 2Mb of chip RAM, 4Mb of fast RAM, the Advanced Graphics Architecture chip set (formerly known as AA), four Zorro III slots, three PC slots, a video slot, and a processor slot.

The machine also sports a high-density (1.76Mb) floppy drive, two 3.5in drive bays (one internal) and one 5.25in bay for a CD-ROM or tape backup drive. The 120Mb hard drive uses a 16-bit IDE, rather than SCSI, interface, which is quite a disappointment, but Commodore promises a 32-bit Zorro III SCSI-2 card before Christmas.



256,000 colours, 60 frames per second – pass me a tissue

The system runs AmigaDOS 3.0, which is essentially AmigaDOS 2.1 with added support for the Advanced Graphics Architecture (AGA) and a few added utilities.

This is a dream Amiga. The AGA graphics chips are blazingly fast, and sport a full 16 million colour palette. The available resolutions are the same as the ECS chips (up to 1280 x 512 PAL, plus overscan), but you can now use up to 256 colours in any resolution.

Also, the new HAM8 mode allows 262,000 colours on-screen at one time. This is effectively as good as true 24-bit graphics, as there are fewer than 262,000 pixels on-screen simultaneously.

A Commodore employee demonstrated a HAM8 ray-traced animation that updated at 60 frames per second in 640 x 400 resolution!

He stated that the A4000 can handles 60 frame per second animation in any resolution and colour depth – with AmigaDOS 3.0's new Intuition double-buffering, the A4000 can swap up to 2000 frames per second, but no monitor could handle that kind of screen update speed. The AGA chip set includes Alice, which replaces Agnus and supports 2Mb of Chip RAM, and Lisa, which replaces Denise and provides the full 24-bit palette.

The graphics chips now have 32-bit access to Chip memory, but a special mode allows them to do two fetches in a single cycle – effectively providing 64-bit access to Chip memory!

These chips aren't compatible with older Amigas, although I'm certain some enterprising third-party company will find a way to cram them into the 500, 2000, and 3000.

You can add up to a total of 16Mb of Fast RAM on the motherboard using standard 32-bit SIMM modules.

The new Workbench is amazing. Not only can you display 256 colours on your Workbench, but you can also use a 256-colour IFF picture as a backdrop. The Workbench does slow down a bit with that much colour resolution, but it's still faster than a 16-colour Workbench on an older Amiga.

If you drop down to 64 colours, screen updating is as fast as a four-colour Workbench on a classic Amiga. The A4000's 68040 is on a plug-in card that goes in the machine's processor socket – there's no processor on the motherboard. This indicates that Commodore may bring out a 68030 or even 68020 version simply by substituting a new processor card, and possibly reducing the number of slots and putting the motherboard in a slimline case.

This is reinforced by the fact that Commodore labels the front of the machine ``A4000/040.''

Commodore's new Vice President of Engineering, Lou Eggebrecht, gave some vivid hints of developments to come in the Amiga market during Saturday's keynote speech.

Graphics chips

All new Amigas Commodore designs will use the AGA graphics chips or better. Commodore will be taking a two-tiered approach to development, working to create a hot new machine for the low end and continuing high-end development as well.

The goal is to reduce the basic consumer Amiga to two chips to reduce costs – A4000-level Amigas will be only four chips making up a total of over a million transistors.

High level machines may support up to 1k x 1k graphics with true 24-bit colour. DSP sound will also appear in future machines. He also hinted of AmigaDOS 3.1, with network support, and AmigaDOS 4.0, which will support retargetable graphics.

The company is using new development techniques that will allow them to design new generation chips in a matter of months instead of years. Eggebrecht really seems to have a handle on what both gamers and professionals want out of the Amiga, and future models should be very impressive.

More new products

New Horizons introduced ProWrite 3.3, which displays 256-colour graphics under AGA on the A4000, adds support for SoftLogik's HotLinks standard, and sports a print preview window and new ARexx commands.

CSA showed the new Derringer board, which will add a 25MHz 68030 to an A500 or A2000 for a retail price of only $249.95 (£137)!

It supports 1, 2, 4, or 8Mb of 32-bit Fast RAM and a 50MHz 68881 or 68882 maths co-processor – at extra cost, of course. Still, you can add the Derringer with 2Mb of RAM to your A500 for just over $300 and get Amiga 3000-level performance!

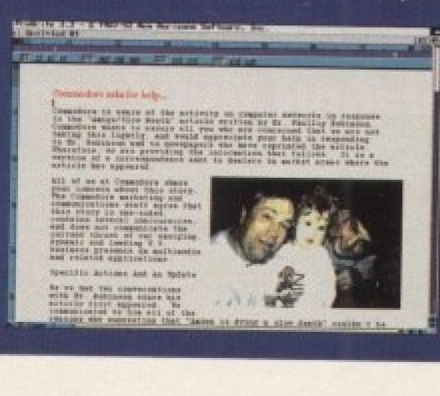
INOVAtronics showed CanDo 2.0, which is now geared as a professional authoring system with tons of new commands, a much-improved 200-page manual, and 68040 support.

They also announced that they were opening a new office in Cologne, Germany to better serve European users.

It was morph-mania at the show. Black Belt Systems has made ImageMaster's morphing faster and much easier to use. GVP just started shipping CineMorph, an impressive standalone version of the morphing module from their ImageFX (nee Mirage) program.

And ASDG were previewing their MorphPlus software. If you need to change a photo of your house cat into your Aunt Hazel, you'll have plenty of choices.

DMI displayed Digital EditMaster, a real-time JPEG compression/decompression board for the A2000 and A3000. This $2,495 program brings the capabilities of $100,000 editing equipment to the Amiga, with real-time 30 frame per second video capture. (25 fps in PAL.)



Wordprocessing in 256 colours will soon be more than just a dream

Most impressive of all was Digital Creations' Brilliance, a new paint program that works on both classic Amigas and the Amiga 4000.

Not only does it have all the capabilities of Deluxe Paint IV, but it supports them in the 256,000-colour HAM8 mode. Written in 100 per cent machine language, it's much faster than DPaint, especially in HAM.

It would take pages to list all the impressive features, which include multiple levels of undo and redo, multiple brushes and anim-brush, incredible gradient mode support, tweening, morphing, and Bezier curves.

This $249 program will ship before Christmas. However, EA promises some competition, as Commodore hinted that Deluxe Paint V would be out soon as well.


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Talking

Communications is a confusing place for the newcomer. It seems to have more jargon attached than any other area of the Amiga except programming, yet when it comes down to it, it really isn't that complicated.

To access the online world you need several items. First of all, a computer – in this case the Amiga. Secondly you need some terminal software, the best of which is described below. Thirdly you need a modem, the types of which we won't go into now – they need an article in themselves.

Next you need somewhere to call. This can be anything from a local bulletin board system (BBS) to a full-blown commercial offering like CIX or Compuserve. Many BBSs are members of the Fidonet system which allows messages and files to be passed all round the world, via a local board, for the cost of a local call.

Phone bills

Commercial boards also cost you the price of a call, but depending where they are situated may mean long distance phone bills, and in addition will normally incur anything up to £10 per hour on top simply for dialling in.

On these pages you'll find four boards which should be at a medium call rate for most readers, together with a list of more scattered boards, at least one of which should be fairly local to you.

The four featured boards are fairly typical of the middle-of-the-road range in the facilities they offer, and all are free to casual callers.

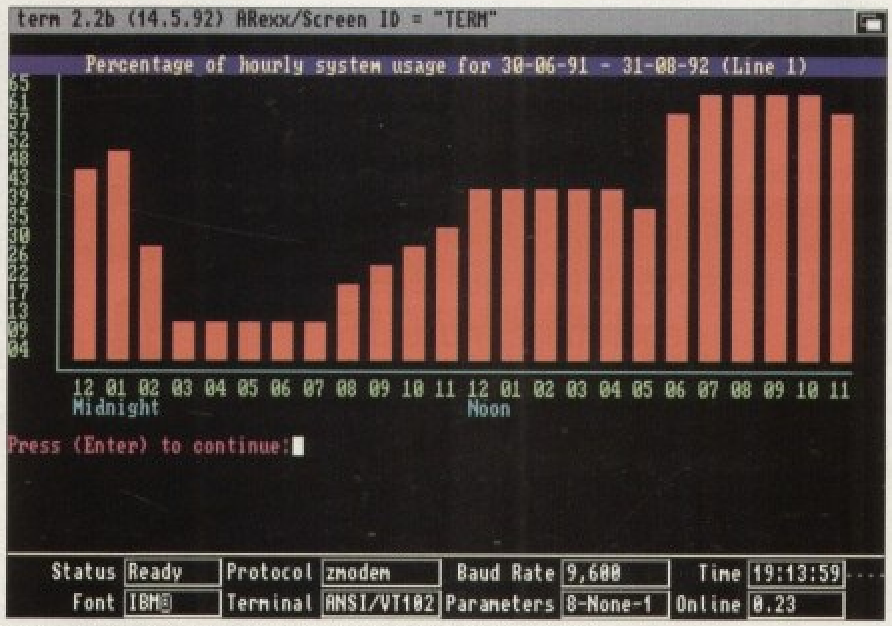
Amateur

One thing to remember when calling bulletin boards is that they are run on an amateur basis.

The sysops (system operators) pay from their own pockets to update their equipment, meet phone bills and so on, so many of them ask for a contribution from regular users.

This is usually as little as £10 per year, which isn't a lot for you to pay out for the time, trouble and expenses incurred by the person providing a service to you.

It's rather like shareware – if you find the service useful, pay up for the sake of your conscience if nothing else.



The rainbow-coloured opening screen for Aspects can also be viewed in plain black and white if you prefer to speed things up

Terminal software

Ncomm

Probably the most popular software available, Ncomm finally went shareware in v2.0 last year. Don't be put off by the 2.0 tag if you are a WB1.3 user though – it still works.

Ncomm's popularity is probably as much due to its ability to handle scripts as anything else. These allow short text programs to be written to hop on and off bulletin boards without having to do anything other than type "execute abc".

Version 2.0 suffers in this respect as it has shareware plea requesters popping up now and again while in operation. For this reason alone, many users have refused to upgrade to the latest version.

Jrcomm

There are two problems with Jrcomm. The first is the lack of a script language, and the second that it is really long in the tooth now.

Having said that, there are times when it's worth having in your collection, both for emergencies and for the odds and sods of jobs that Ncomm and Term might not be able to handle.

For instance, when a friend was trying to show me round Compuserve some months ago, Ncomm simply couldn't handle the connection, and Jrcomm was press-ganged out of retirement to save the day.

However, on the whole I would not use it for everyday use. It's workable, but the other options are now far better and easier to use.

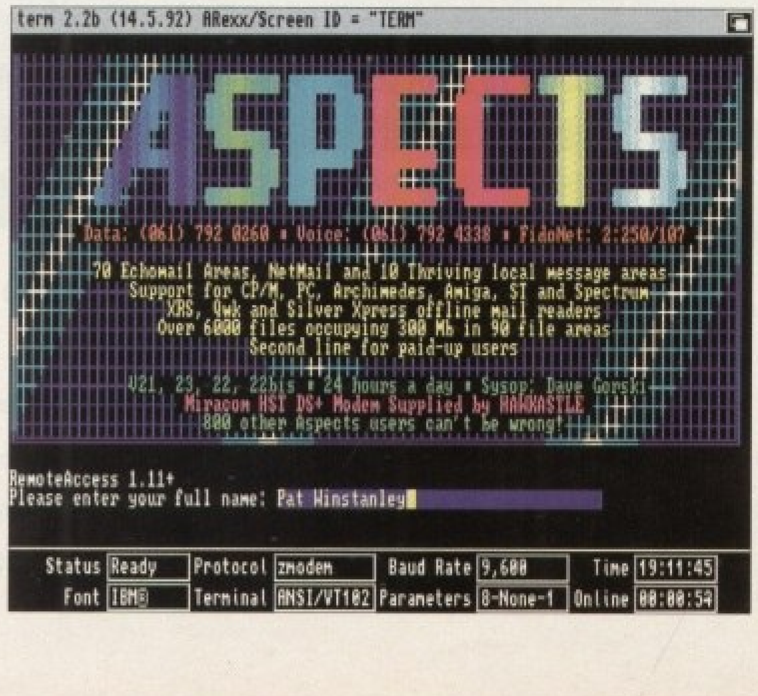
Term 2.2b

Usable with WB2 only, Term has much to offer in terms of flexibility over Ncomm and Jrcomm. In return, it is much more complex to set up. The Phone Book setup is where the power of this terminal program lies, as it is here that each individual BBS number can have a tailor-made set of options set.

Instead of scripts, Term allows the use of ARexx interfacing, as well as a variety of time and energy saving options.

For instance, one option allows CLI commands to be entered when running the program (very handy if you suddenly realise you need to format a disk in an emergency).

The documentation isn't the greatest in the world, but does tell you what you need to know initially. After that it's a matter of asking around on the networks to discover your optimum settings.



It's often useful to know when the busy periods are so you can avoid them. Follow my example and call in the early hours of the morning if you want to hook straight into a busy board like this

Best BBSs

ASPECTS

Manchester
Sysop: Dave Gorski
Modem no: 061-792 0262
Fidonet: 2:250/107

This has to be my favourite board, if for no other reason than it's the one I "point" off.

Aspects has little in the way of frills and fancies, but concentrates instead on giving the user a wide range of messaging facilities, and oodles of files to choose from.

Also supported are several offline readers (OLRs) which allow users to collect all the messages they want to read, download them in a batch, reply offline, then upload those replies.

The board has two telephone lines, one for general users and another for those who have sent the sysop a small donation. This donation (at £10 per annum) allows full use of a fast modem at the BBS end.

Non-subscribers are limited to use of the subscriber's line at peak BT rate periods only, when the board isn't too busy.

Dave Gorski is also the moderator of the Amiga_UK echo which means he has to keep a close eye on what is being said, and ensure that messages remain on topic in the echo.



loud and clear

There is a mass of exciting information from all around the globe just waiting to be tapped into. Pat Winstanley provides a guiding hand into the world of comms

RED ROSE

Preston

Sysop: Tony Walker

Modem no: 0772-652212
Fidonet: 2:252/309

Similar to Aspects in many ways, Red Rose is also a supporter of messages and files. However there are some online games available, one of which is featured in these pages.

This particular game is a little like a lottery. It is presented in the n,s,e,w style of the standard text adventure, but from a brief look it seems fairly random rather than logical.

One of the strengths of this board is the file areas. Workbench 2 alone has hundreds of files available, and Tony is always on the lookout for more.

All the file areas I've seen have been well laid out with informative notes attached to the filenames.

Tony is also happy to support points from his system, which is a big plus when you get the bug and really can't afford to read and reply to acres of messages online.

061 FOR AMIGA

Manchester

Sysop: Andy Grifo

Modem no: 061-799 4922
Fidonet: 2:250/120

If you're into games, this is definitely a board to look at. Although message areas and files are available, online fun is the principal attraction here.

Andy even runs a betting system which allows users who aren't so hot at gaming to wager download credits on the outcome of games played between experts.

It's certainly an interesting way to encourage users who might be a little shy to participate in the fun.

To prevent you spending hours of time on the board, which not only puts your bills up, but stops others getting on the meantime, the helpfiles for the various games are available for download.

This way you can study the rules and tactics carefully while offline. I've found this a very friendly board, although a little confusing to navigate at times.

BBS directory

The following list contains a selection of BBSs from all over the country who are actively looking for new callers. All operate 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

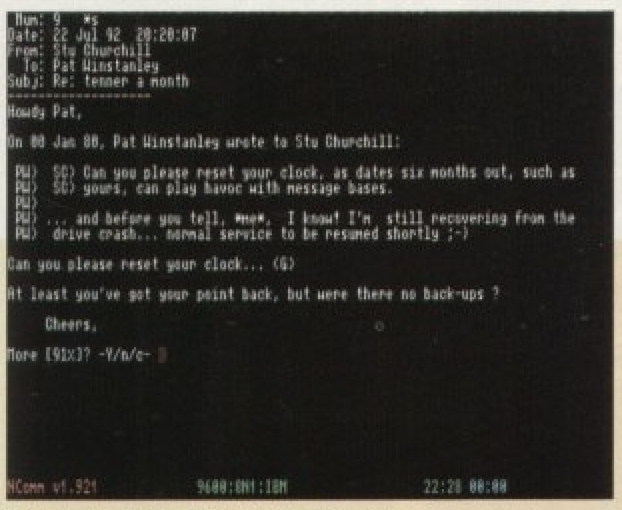
There are hundreds of others not listed, and these boards will probably all hold lists of other boards in their areas. Simply dial in and ask the sysop for advice to find the best board for your interests and phone bill.

Please note that while these numbers are believed to be correct at the time of writing, bulletin boards do come and go, so if you are consistently getting no answer, especially in the middle of the night, please try again another time.

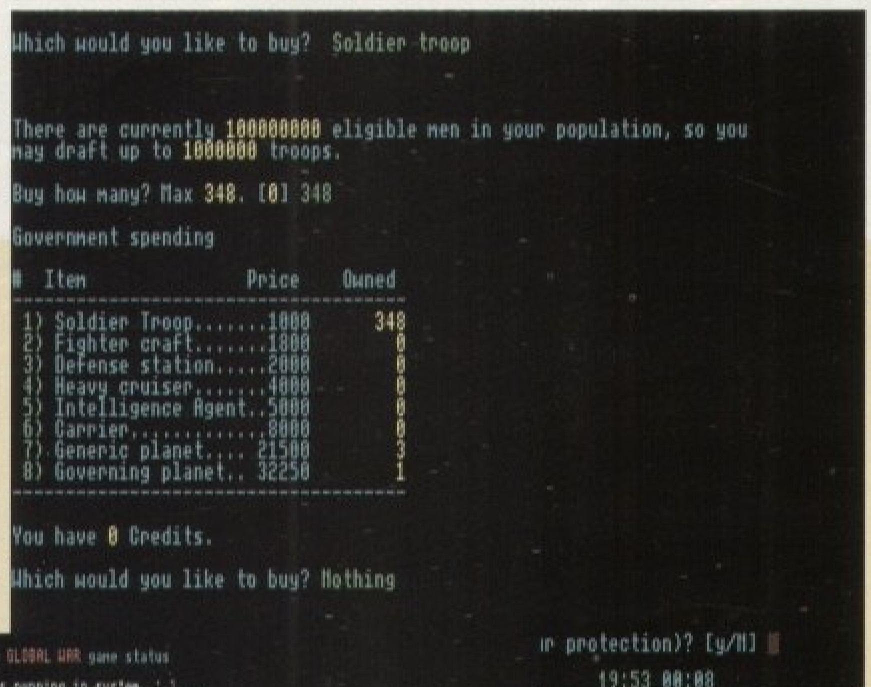
You just might be trying to connect your modem to a very annoyed voice on the other end of the line.

P-Square	0293 531261
Laurence	0992 447838
Foon	0273 474352
Mininet-3	0642 608751
Northpaul	0236 727991
Dark Star	0224 636649
Spectromagic	0525 222048
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Clipper	091-265 1916
Black Dog Towers	081-983 3472
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Hotel	0634 831389
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01 for Amiga	071-377 1358
Severn Side	0452 611342
Burning Chrome	0428 727060
Protocol	0403 272931
Prodigy	061-486 6542
Demo Factory	0892 516304



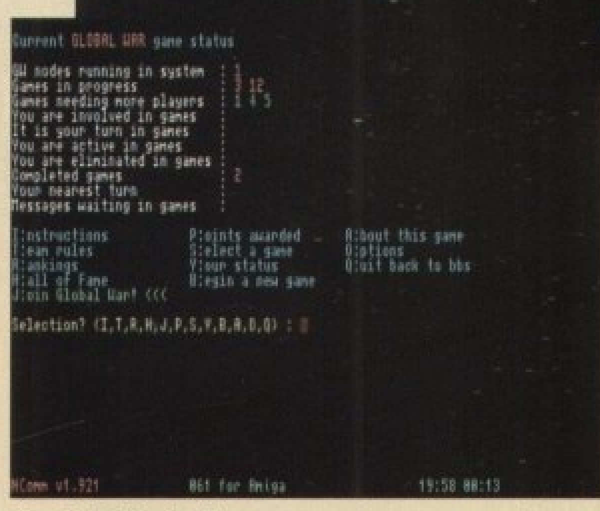
If you're looking for WB2 utilities this is the place to go. Tony Walker is keen to supply the very latest and best programs to his callers



Space Empires, and I'm coming in as a novice to try to make sense of it all...



Like other boards, Red Rose carries echoes around the country. Here's a message I posted to a different board when I had a little problem



Here Global War is telling me what I'm doing... I'm glad something is!



Global War again – this time we're viewing some of the experts at the game in their team endeavours

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EFFECTIVE 1st SEPT 92

GVP's HD8+ hard drive and A530 hard drive with 40MHz accelerator, represent the highest quality Amiga 500 peripherals, at very affordable prices. Each incorporates a fast action hard drive, RAM expansion capability, custom VLSI chip and FaaaSTROM SCSI driver, for unbeatable performance.

The HD8+ hard drive offers up to 8Mb of standard internal Fast RAM expansion and the A530 Combo, up to 8Mb of 32-bit wide fast RAM expansion. Both feature a SCSI controller, which supports up to 6 additional devices, and an Autoboot/Game cut-off switch. Both are available in 52, 120 and 240Mb hard drive versions.

In addition, the A530 Combo zooms the Amiga forward with an 030 accelerator, running at a blistering 40MHz. This enables your Amiga 500 to run at an incredible 12.1 MIPS, faster than an Amiga 3000! No other product in the world combines all the features found in the A530 Combo! A plug-in PC emulator option, shown below, is available for the HD8+ and A530 Combo.

	HD8+	A530
HARD DRIVE		
SCSI HARD DRIVE 52, 120 & 240Mb VERSIONS	•	•
ULTRA FAST 15ms ACCESS	•	•
TRANSFER RATE UP TO 2,100K/sec* (*THE RATE OF THE 240Mb HD)	•	•
ACCELERATOR		
40MHz 68030EC CPU		•
OPTIONAL 68882 MATHS CO-PROCESSOR		•
RUNS AT 12.1 MIPS (FASTER THAN AN A3000!)		•
HARDWARE SUPPORT TO MAP KICKSTART INTO 32-bit WIDE FAST RAM FOR FASTER OPERATION (LIKE CACHING THE OPERATING SYSTEM)		•
RAM BOARD		
UP TO 8MB OF 8 OR 9-bit FAST RAM (8 OR 9-bit WIDE SIMMS - 120ns OR QUICKER)	•	
UP TO 8Mb OF 32-bit WIDE FAST RAM (32-bit WIDE SIMMs - 60ns)		•
1Mb POPULATED		•
OTHER FEATURES		
HDD/ACCELERATOR 'CUT-OFF' SWITCH FOR 100% GAME COMPATIBILITY	•	•
SCSI CONTROLLER FOR UP TO 6 ADDITIONAL DEVICES	•	•
VLSI CUSTOM CHIP	•	•
FAAAST ROM SCSI DRIVER	•	•
IDENTICAL COLOUR & STYLING TO THE A500	•	•
BUILT-IN VENTILATION FAN TO PREVENT THE UNIT FROM OVERHEATING	•	•
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REMOVABLE MEDIA SUPPORT	•	•
DIRECT MEMORY ACCESS (DMA) STYLE FOR ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE	•	•
EASY-TO-USE SOFTWARE	•	•
2 YEAR WARRANTY	•	•



A530


HD8+

PC EMULATOR
PLUG-IN OPTION FOR HD8+ & A530



- 16MHz 80286 processor
- 287 Maths Co-Processor socket
- 512K of PC RAM plus the use of Amiga RAM
- Supports Hercules, CGA, EGA/VGA (monochrome) and T3100 video modes
- Runs MS-DOS (3.2 and upwards) plus thousands of other PC programs

This powerful 286 emulator module simply plugs into the "mini-slot" of the GVP HD8+ or A530 (without invalidating the warranty). It has full access to the Amiga's resources and allows you to run PC and Amiga programs at the same time, giving you two computers in one.

£199 Ref: EMU 0500

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'GVP have done it again!' ... 94% AMIGA FORMAT 9/92 (A530)

'... the build quality is excellent ... in terms of performance, their gear is the best ... their equipment is worth every penny'. AMIGA FORMAT 9/92 (A530)

PLUG IN HARD DRIVES & ACCELERATORS

PRICES FROM:

£349

MODEL	52Mb HD	120Mb HD	240Mb HD
HARD DRIVE HD8+	£349 Ref: HAR 0852	£449 Ref: HAR 0920	£729 Ref: HAR 0942
A530 COMBO HARD DRIVE & ACCELERATOR	£699 Ref: HAR 0962	£799 Ref: HAR 0974	£1079 Ref: HAR 0986

FOR ALL AMIGAS



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- Plugs into parallel port
- MIDI support for song input
- Extensive editing features

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AMIGA 1500 + 2000 + 3000 PRODUCTS

ACCELERATORS

	030 25MHz	030 40MHz	030 50MHz	NEW! 040 33MHz
Processor	68030EC	68030EC	68030	68040
Speed MIPS	7.48	12.1	15	30
Speed MHz	25	40	50	33
Math co-proc	68882	68882	68882	Built-in
Standard 32-bit RAM	1Mb	4Mb	4Mb	4Mb
Maximum 32-bit RAM	13Mb	16Mb	16Mb	16Mb
Extras	SCSI	SCSI	SCSI	SCSI Ser/Par
Code	UPG 0115	UPG 0400	UPG 0500	UPG 0740
PRICE	£599	£849	£1199	£1699

All GVP G-Force accelerators can be turned into a hard card by adding a Mount Kit, GVA 4251, £39.95, making it the ULTIMATE Amiga 1500/2000 peripheral. Any 1" SCSI drive can then be mounted on to the accelerator.



HARD CARDS

- Factory installed Hard Drives
- 0, 52, 120, 240 & 420Mb options
- On-board 8Mb memory sockets
- Add up to 6 SCSI devices
- Easy to install SIMMS

The Impact II HC8 hard cards are the equivalent of the HD8+ hard drive, but for the 1500 and 2000 models. Not only are they some of the fastest hard drives available, but they also incorporate an unpopulated 8Mb RAM expansion board.

52Mb	Ref: HAR 1352	£299
120Mb	Ref: HAR 1420/1422	£429
240Mb	Ref: HAR 1540	£699
420Mb	Ref: HAR 1542	£1099



VIDEO ENHANCER

- 16 million colours @ 768 x 580 PAL Res
- Supports comp video, S-VHS & RGB
- Broadcast quality genlock
- Now with RGB splitter

Impact Vision 24 is the latest 24-bit Professional Video Adaptor. It features 16 million colours on screen at once, built-in genlock, flicker fixer, frame buffer, frame grabber and digital keyer. Supplied with Caligari-IV24 3D modelling and rendering software, Scala IV24 video titling software, plus Macro Paint 24-bit paint package. A1500/2000 requires additional adaptor, GVA 5224, £49.95

IV-24 - VIU SPLITTER	Ref: VID 7024	£1499
IV-24 - VIU TRANSCODER	Ref: VID 7124	£1899

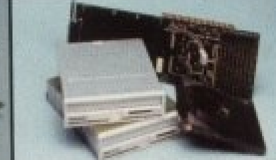


RAM BOARDS

- Up to 8Mb of FAST RAM
- Upgrade in 2Mb increments
- Supports industry standard RAM chips
- Diagnostic software included
- Fully auto-configuring

The RAM-8 offers an easy way to upgrade your 1500 or 2000 in 2Mb increments up to 8Mb. The RAM 8 is fully auto-configuring and is supplied with peace-of-mind diagnostic software. 6Mb configuration supported for bridgeboard owners.

0Mb populated	RAM 2800	£99
2Mb populated	RAM 2802	£149



REMOVABLE MEDIA

- Syquest 44 or 88Mb removable media
- Available with or without HC8 Controller
- 20ms access time
- GVP HC8 Controller option extra
- External case available for A500/3000

Each drive comes with a removable cartridge.

External Case	Ref: GVA 5019	£179
44Mb (Bare Drive)	Ref: HAR 1554	£399
44Mb (+HC8)	Ref: HAR 1568	£479
88Mb (Bare Drive)	Ref: HAR 1578	£499
88Mb (+HC8)	Ref: HAR 1581	£579

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Which computer(s), if any, do you own? 68E

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METNET

Hull
Sysop: Jon Witty
Modem no: 0482-473871
Fidonet: 2:252/129

Metnet is enormous. With ten phone lines running simultaneously the board can handle multi-user chat and online games with ease.

One of the reasons for its popularity is the fact that it is situated in Hull. Now Hull, unlike the rest of Britain, has its own private phone system. With this, for just 5p, users can have unlimited time on local calls. Personally I feel this ought to be stopped – it just isn't fair to the rest of us!

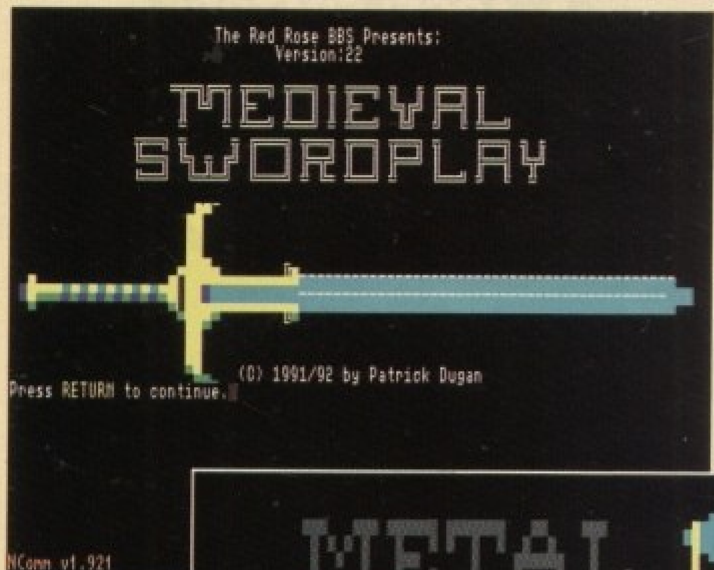
However, Jon has certainly taken advantage of the possibilities, and offers lots of online games as well as plenty of local and national message areas. In addition he regularly runs special events like quizzes and other competitions.

One nice touch on the board is animated displays. For instance one of the game menus runs down the left of the screen, while on the right there is an automated game of Space Invaders in progress.

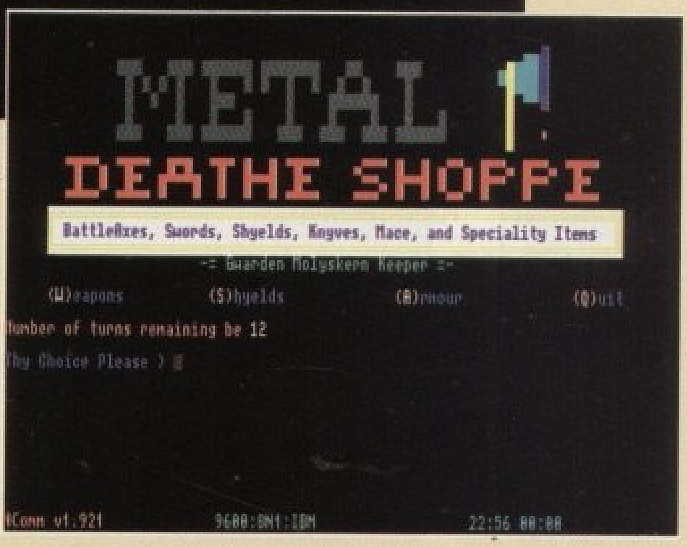
Worth a call even if you are outside the local area, but be warned – the board is vast and you'll need a few calls to explore it properly.

A typical online game

These shots are from the game Medieval Swordplay as found on Red Rose.



Doesn't this just beg to be collected and taken on adventure?



Better arm up before heading off into the unknown. Completing quests successfully provides money to buy things



Swords, shields etc – the list is endless – if you can afford them



If you can't afford to buy anything there are games of chance to be won in the Olde Pubbe – try your hand

Comms jargon

ZMODEM: This is a communications protocol which controls the method by which data is transferred between your modem and the remote modem.

Currently this is the most commonly used, so if your host – the BBS you call – offers this option you would be as well to use it.

Data is sent in blocks and if an error is detected due to a noisy line, or a bad block length check, transmission of that block will halt and the block will be sent again.

There is also usually an option to resume transfer. This is handy if the line gets so bad that no more data can be sent. Data you have already received is held, and when you redial on a (hopefully) better line, instead of downloading the whole file again, Zmodem ensures that you resume from where you stopped.

Beware though if you download to RAM, as resetting your machine will lose the data you have already received unless you save it to floppy or hard disk first!

FLOW CONTROL: Sometimes it is useful for the connection rate between your Amiga and modem to be different from that between your modem and the remote modem. This is called flow control.

It is intended to ensure your computer and modem don't lose bits of data between them. The most common is controlled by the hardware and is called RTS/CTS and there is also a software controlled one called XON/XOFF.

These are set up using both the Amiga preferences and your terminal software settings, and both modem and computer must agree on the settings used.

BAUD RATE: This refers to the numbers you'll see bandied about like 2,400, 9,600 and so on. Basically if you connect two modems at 2,400, the maximum cps (characters per second) which can be transmitted is 240.

Similarly a 9,600 connection will give a maximum of 960 cps. This is only the maximum though, and if your telephone connection suffers from crackles and hisses the transmission rate may drop tremendously.

Another point to remember is that if your modem is faster than the one at the other end, you will only be able to receive data at the rate the other end can transmit it.

MNP: This stands for Microcom Networking Protocol. If that leaves you cold, don't worry. The various MNP standards are methods of noise suppression and data compression.

For instance, if you have a noisy line, data may be lost during transmission. Using error correction, the effect of the noise is suppressed. Data is transmitted in blocks, with a checksum included. If the received checksum and data block don't match the data will be re-sent until they do.

Data compression on the other hand attempts to squash the data being transmitted in order to shorten transmission time. This works well with files which haven't been compressed already, but the result is virtually unnoticeable on pre-compressed files.

FIDONET: Throughout the world there are bulletin board which collect messages from their local users, then use the Fidonet system to pass those messages to their destination at other BBSs. Every night – and sometimes at other times too – each Fidonet BBS receives a packet of messages from the board behind it in the chain, stores them for its own users, adds on messages from its own users then waits for the BBS ahead of it in the chain to call and collect the resulting package.

ECHOES: Messages from BBS users are placed in different "files", each called an echo. Each echo deals with a particular subject so BBS users don't have to wade through oceans of messages of no interest to them to find what they do want.

There are at least a dozen or so Amiga specific echoes which travel around either UK only BBSs or all round the world. You can compare notes with BBS users in Canada, Australia, or anywhere else in the world, all for the price of a local call.

These echoes are public, in other words anyone anywhere can read them, and usually write messages in them too. For private communication there is another system called Netmail.

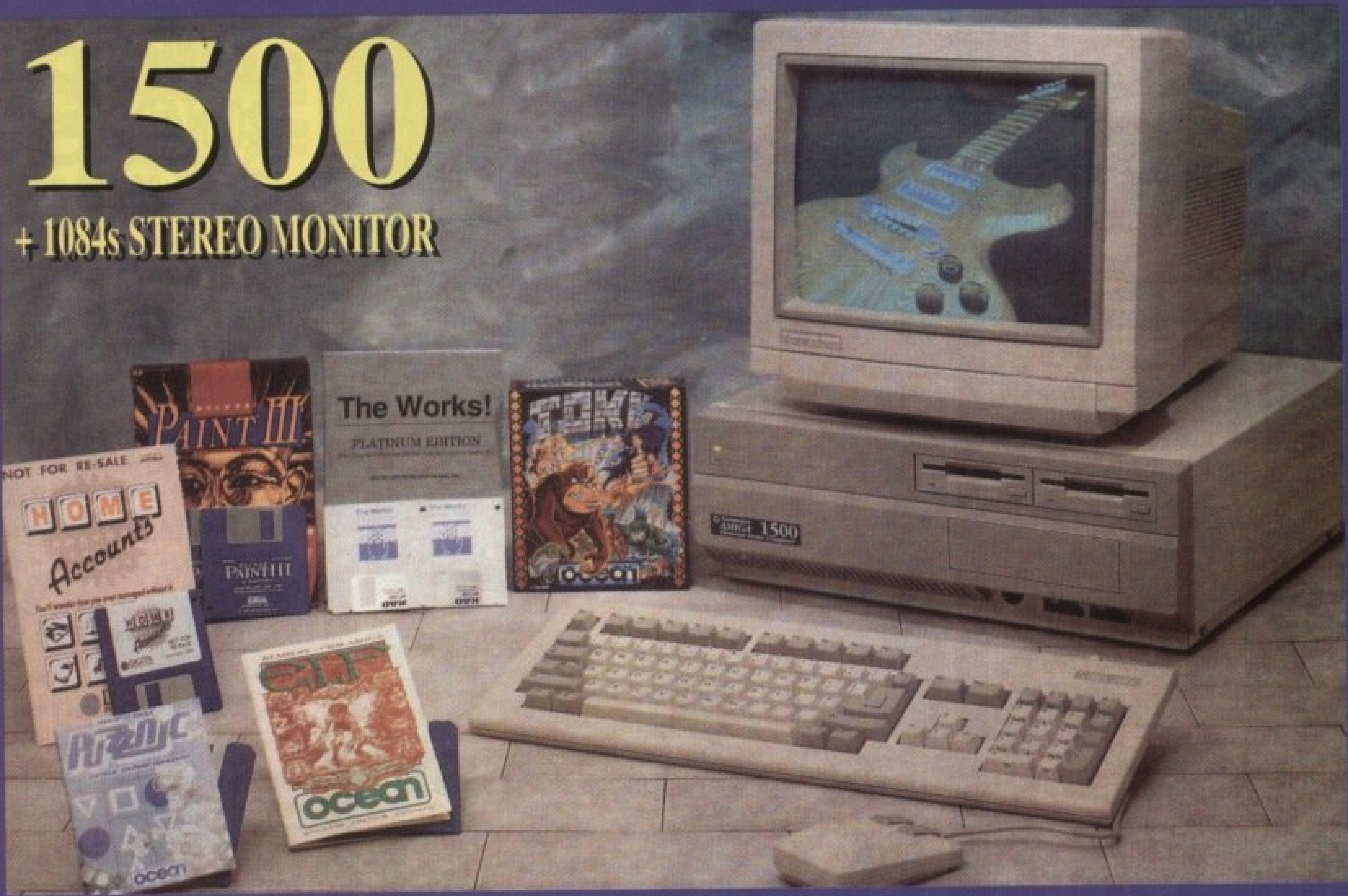
NETMAIL: If you want to send a message to a particular person, which you don't want others to read, you need to use Netmail. Most BBS sysops will happily allow the transmission of Netmail, although some ask for a fee to do so, and some won't handle it at all.

Use Netmail when what you have to say is either confidential, or simply of little or no interest to other users of the echo. It is extremely annoying to spend time online reading an exchange between two people who are chatting about which of their local pubs to meet up in next week.

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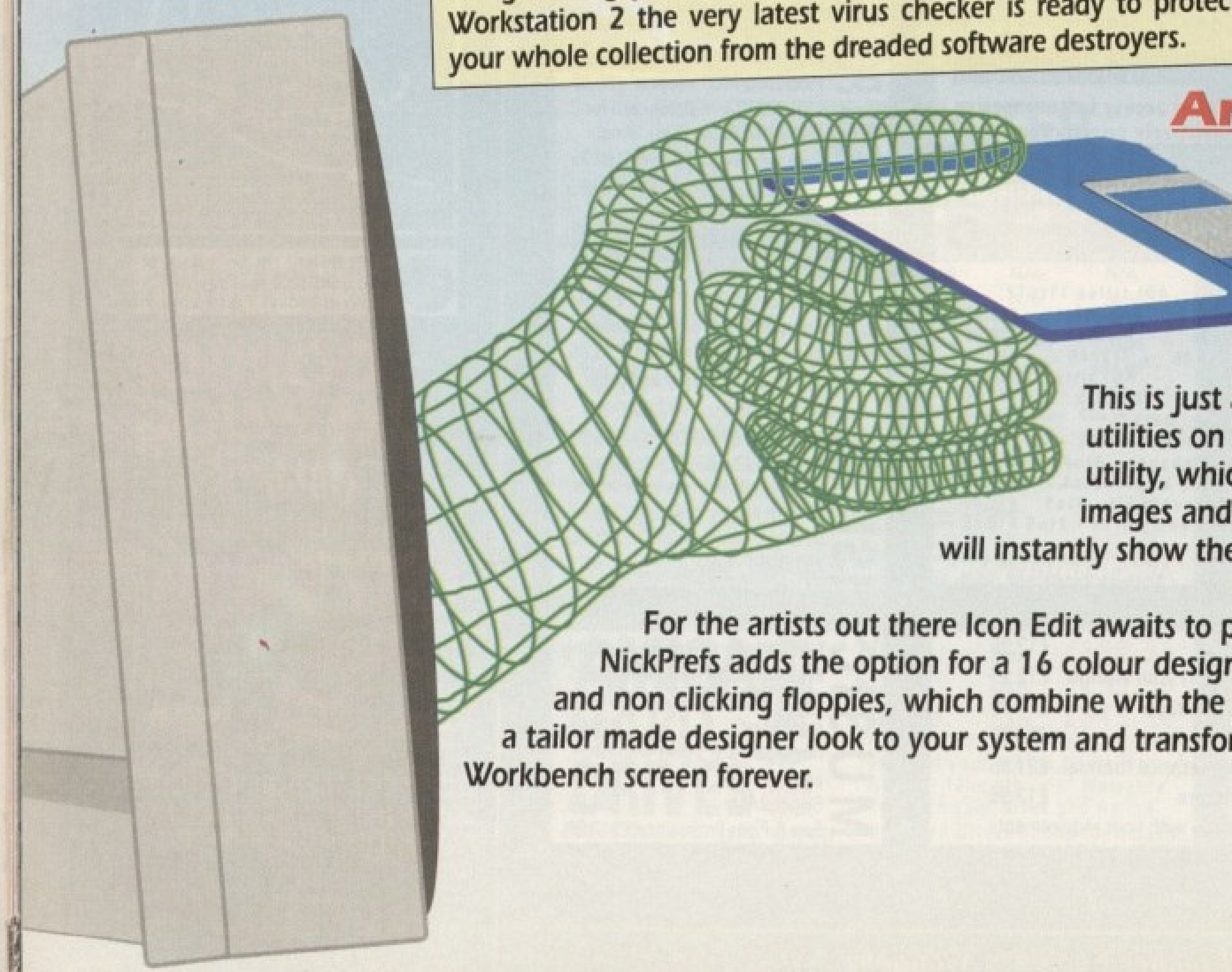
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the DISK

Play what's probably the best shareware shoot-'em-up ever – and we just dare you to survive Vision Software's Cybernetix

Shoot to kill!

It's a rare occasion when a CoverDisk submission has half the office clustered around one monitor, and even rarer when they all watch for five minutes and still decide they want to try it for themselves.

Cybernetix, however, resulted in a mass scrum for the only two available joysticks in which several shins were marked for life and not a few noses put out of joint.

In short, Cybernetix offers exactly the right mixture of chaos and action which made the arcade game such an integral part of our leisure culture, which is one way of saying that it's fast and violent.

The game is immediately reminiscent of Defender and other horizontal shoot-'em-ups of the golden age of arcades, but it's not long before the game's modern edge begins to show.

Power-ups galore and a subtle tactical twist lend Cybernetix a thoroughly addictive edge which soon sinks its teeth deep into the player's pleasure centres. To begin with, the player is equipped with a fairly wimpy spaceship firing only a single pulse laser from its nasal area, and with this rather unassuming piece of killing kit the objective is to clear a level of enemy ships and asteroids. But why kill those beautiful asteroids? Have you seen them?

The graphics in this game are superb. Neat, fast moving sprites and truly respect-engendering asteroids which it seems almost a crime to blast into nothingness float around in the blackness of space making Cybernetix the most visually appealing shareware game to hit the *AC* offices in a long time. Once the blasting does start, though, the game really begins to impress. Fast isn't a particularly suitable adjective to apply in this situation. Cybernetix is mean and menacing with a rapid streak a mile wide.

Smooth movement, joystick control most commercial releases can't match,

Model4D

Author: Sean Turner

Model4D is one of a very few shareware modelling programs designed to offer many of the features normally only associated with commercial packages.

As such, it represents an ideal way for users to experiment with modelling inexpensively, and could be the spark which prompts some to go the whole hog and buy Real3D or Imagine.

It would be a naive user who expected a shareware program such as this to match up to the £300 big boys, but even a cynic can't fail to be surprised at the range of features Model4D has to offer.

As well as the usual creation of objects and primitives, Model4D has a lathe function, extrusion, and even an animation capability, though this is not fully implemented in the shareware release.

Being a complex package, and one into which the author has invested a great deal of time and mental sweat, Model4D does not come to you in its complete form.

Some of the functions either haven't yet been finalised – this is the program's first version – or have been disabled to encourage shareware donations, so in the interests of future developments, I'd urge all those impressed by the program to register immediately.

Tri-view screen

Model4D's main editing screen is a full-size 3D representation of the objects being created, but a tri-view screen similar to that used in Real3D and Imagine can be switched on by clicking the appropriate icon found in the tool box to the right of the screen (see diagram).

At first, the only object visible is the light source, represented by a star, but others are merely a couple of clicks away.

Model4D uses a hierarchical object structure similar to Real3D's approach, so start by clicking on the hierarchy icon to bring up a table of objects. This is blank to begin with, so we'll follow the author's own example project, which you'll find in the on-disk user manual

Click on the Create button found at the bottom of the hierarchy panel, then on rename, and type in the name "Teapot". Now click on the Go To button to make Teapot our root object.

To add the body of the teapot, select



and screens full of exploding matter without the least hint of the game slowing pay ample testament to the author's use of the Amiga's talents with sprites.

The objective, as in all games based on xenocide (*xenocide?* – Ed), is to kill as many aliens as possible before your inevitable demise. To aid the player in this, there is one simple feature – the power up.

Every asteroid in the game will break down into three smaller pieces when fired upon, and many of the mini asteroids release blue power crystals when destroyed.

If collected, these can boost the player's bonus scoreat the end of the level, but it's a rash and short-lived player who collects them all.

This is because when an alien ship gobbles up two or more crystals it leaves behind a power-up when subsequently destroyed by the player. In addition, when a complete attack wave is destroyed, a power up will be left behind by the last ship to die.

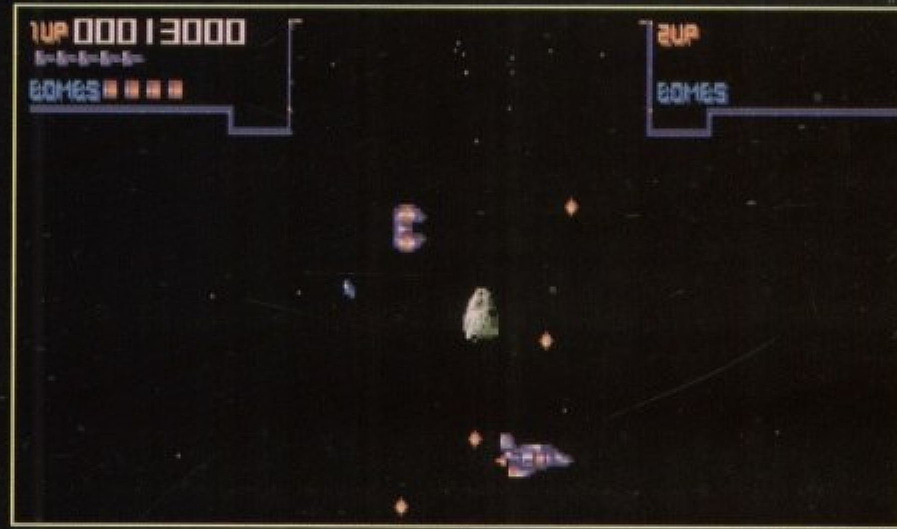
Power ups include faster shots, three-way fan fire, shields, and so on, and are essential for a long and happy alien murdering career. The wise player will therefore avoid picking up too many crystals and will always be alert to the appearance of attack waves.

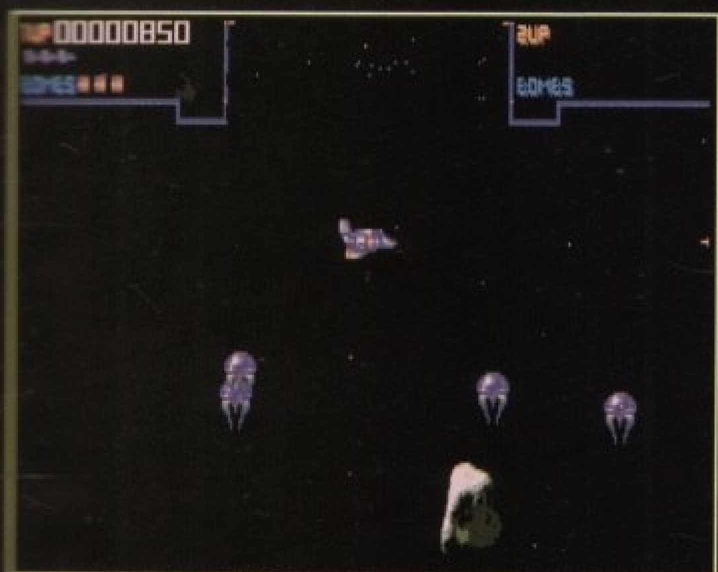
Without the various nut-job power-ups, among the handiest of which has to be three-way fire, the appearance of attack waves will signal nothing more than the closing curtain on a final act which would make Hamlet look like an essay in pacifism.

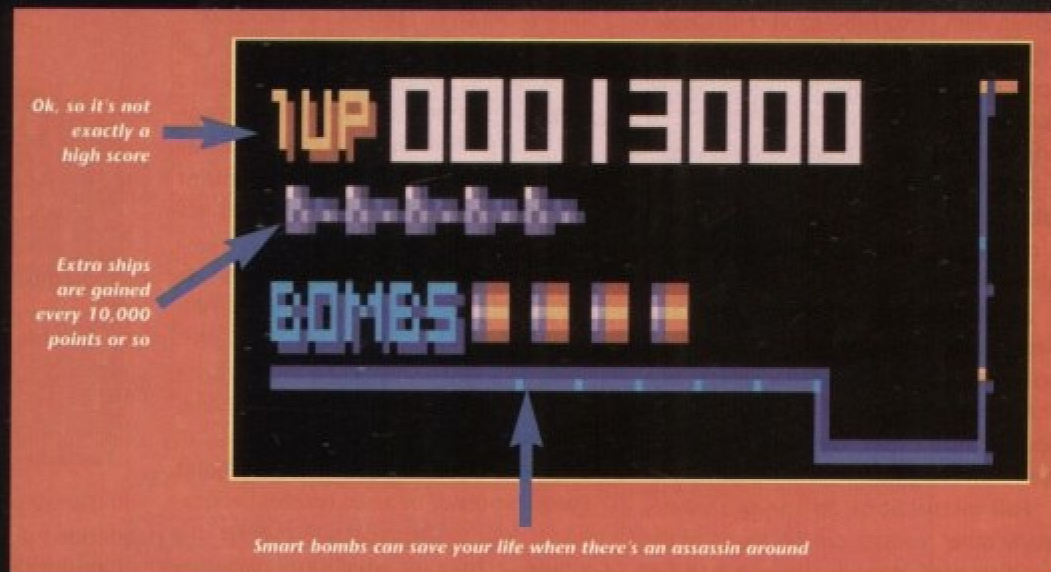
Not the most intimidating of characters in their own right, the aliens in Cybernetix can quickly swamp the player by sheer force of numbers and a tendency towards suicidal attacks which even Hezbollah would be proud of.

The most fanatically involved of these red-eyed, screaming, banzai-wailing (that's enough ludicrous adjectives – Ed) lunatics is the aptly named Assassin droid.

This little blighter appears in the sector, represented by a red dot on the scanner, and hurtles toward the player faster than an enraged neighbour in whose garden one's cat has just defecated. I'll leave you to figure out for yourself how to deal with the Assassin, but please watch out for the level in which an entire wave of assassins comes zooming over the horizon. A change of underwear can often be the only noticeable result of this encounter.







Lathe from the Tools menu, and when the requester appears select the appropriate number of divisions for your machine.

The more divisions, the smoother and more detailed an object will be, so for 68030 owners, raise the default level to 20, and for A500 owners a suitable choice might be 10 to 15.

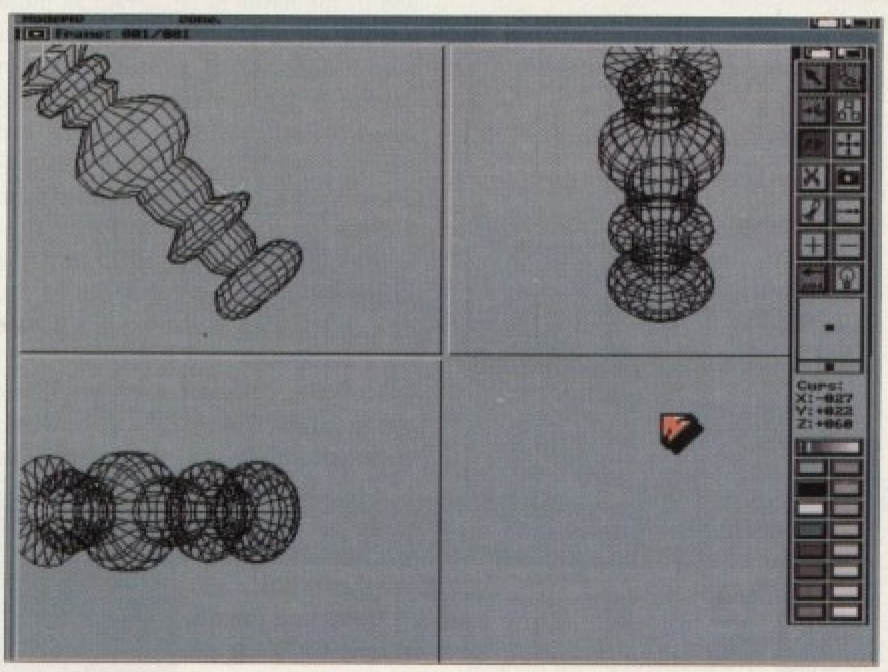
If we stick to wireframe mode, all users can go for 30 divisions, but unaccelerated users should be prepared for a long wait when rendering the final object.

Divisions

OK, let's create that teapot. Click on OK to confirm your choice of divisions, then mark out a vertical axis by clicking twice with the mouse button – once at the top of the axis, then again at the bottom.

Next, mark out a C-shaped semicircle to one side of the axis line, and double click on the last point.

Voilà! One teapot body. Notice that it appears in the hierarchy list as "object", then click on Rename to give it a more descriptive title, such as "body".



To make the lid, repeat the above process, shaping your lid just above the main body. It's a good idea to allow the lid to protrude into the body, as a bit of overlap will ensure a more organic wholeness for our teapot.

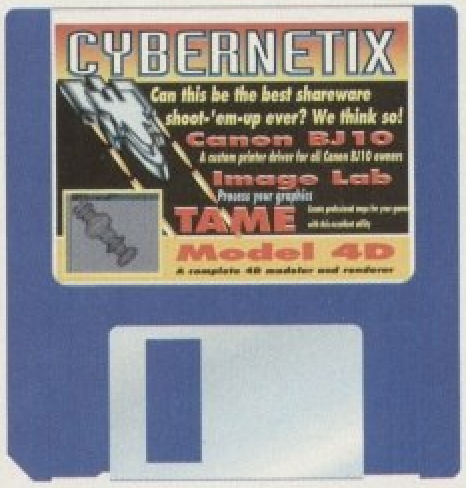
Again, for the spout, use the lathe tool, this time marking out an axis at the correct tilt for the spout of your average beverage dispenser. The spout will tend to look a little like a gun barrel, but in a program which has no organic modelling, this is to be expected. If you don't like it, you can always spend £300 on one of the commercial packages.

Our last feature, the handle, requires Model4D's other construction tool, the lathe function, so select this tool now. A requester will pop up asking for the size – or depth – of the extrude, and as our handle will be fairly thin, a value of ten will do for now.

Click on OK, then mark out the handle by clicking once for each point on its outline. Remember that unlike the Lathe tool, Extrude works fine with closed shapes, so mark out a broad C shape, and double click as usual to finish.

Now that the teapot is finished, go to the Preferences menu, and choose Viewmode/Flat to see the object in solid form. Now click on the palette edit icon and mess about until you find a colour which suits your taste in teapots.

To change the colour of the objects, ➤



click on the name of the object in the hierarchy list, then on the colour of your choice and the screen will be redrawn to show the change. Do this for every part of the teapot, then prepare to render.

To make the most of our rendered scene, go to the Project menu and the Screen item. Two sub-items are available, interlace and overscan, both of which apply only to the screen on which the render takes place. Turn both on by clicking on them, then select render and sit back.

On slower machines, the process can take quite a while, but on larger machines a minute or so should see the teapot in glorious HAM.

As Model4D is written in compiled Basic, its maths routines could be speeded up somewhat, but then if you register as a shareware user, you will receive all future updates direct from the author, so what are you waiting for?

Full instructions on the program's many other features can be found in the on-disk user manual. Have a ball (or should I say a Gourad-shaded sphere?).

ImageLab

Author: Gary Milliorn

ImageLab is a shareware program designed to enable users to transform their IFF images using a wide range of image manipulation and processing features. The results, though not perhaps of ADPro standards, can be impressive.

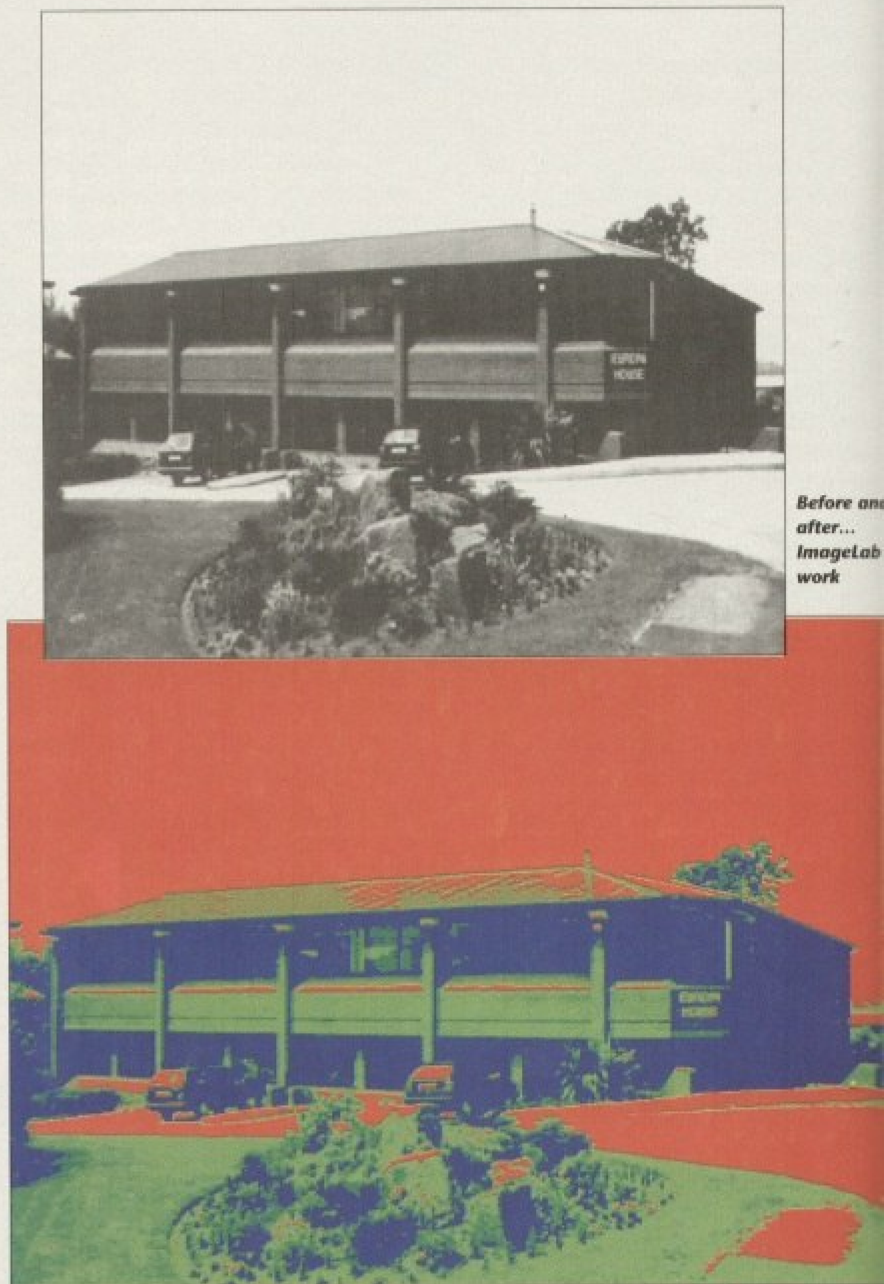
The program works either overlaid on the Workbench screen or in a full screen of its own, and all operations are carried out from either the drop-down menus or through keyboard short-cuts.

This can be a little confusing at first, because the default is a half screen with menus available from either the ImageLab window or the image screen, but you get used to it.

Using ImageLab, it is possible to carry out the usual cut and paste graphics editing processes found in most paint packages, but there are many other functions, some of which can produce exotic results.

Flip, invert, and rescale are present as usual, but the ability to pixelise, convert to greyscale, sharpen, and smooth an image will be new to most, and the more way out functions such as Fast Fourier Transformations and the various filters will be a complete mystery.

Luckily, the author's excellent on-disk documentation contains a complete rundown of all the program's functions. Using this, and a suitable IFF image (there wasn't space on the disk to supply one, I'm afraid) the experimentative user can employ ImageLab either as a workhorse image processor or as an excellent educational tool to demonstrate the various image techniques which are available, how they work, and their effects.



Before and after... ImageLab work

Shareware needs you!

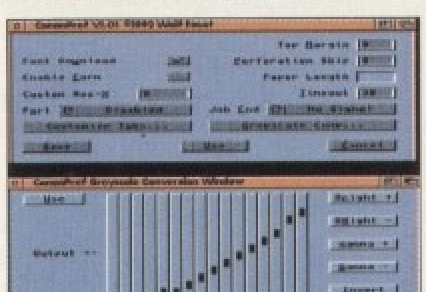
Please remember that many of the program distributed on the *Amiga Computing* CoverDisk are shareware releases. This means that the authors have kindly allowed you, the reader, to sample the program before paying for it.

If you decide to keep a program and intend to use it regularly, you should register as a shareware user with the author. Full details on how to register can be found, where appropriate, in the on-disk documentation.

Shareware authors, if they don't receive enough registrations, will eventually stop releasing programs to the public, which would dry up an indispensible supply of superb software. Keep the faith, and keep sending those fivers!

Canon Utils

Author: Wolf Faust



Canonpref and Fontshop make control of the BJ10 supremely easy

The Canon BJ10 bubblejet printer has over the past year become one of the most popular printers in the Amiga scene, and the *AC* offices have received an increasing number of enquiries about printer drivers and using the Canon to the best of its abilities.

For all you bubblejetters out there, we decided it was high time to distribute a Canon printer driver on the CoverDisk, thus saving you the hassle of finding one, and us the hassle of answering all those enquiries! The Utils package is supplied with a Canon BJ10 printer driver, an installer program for those who aren't sure where the printer driver should go, and two Workbench 2-only preferences programs used to control the printer from Workbench.

Even without these programs, the printer driver will work fine, but all you lucky Workbench 2.xx users will have a few extra options.

To begin, make sure that your BJ10 is connected and that the DIP switch settings are as specified in the on-disk documentation, then boot from your normal Workbench disk.

Make sure there's at least 20k free space for the printer driver, then insert the CoverDisk in a free floppy drive. If you only have one floppy drive, eject the Workbench disk and place the CoverDis in DF0:.

Now open the various windows unt the Canon Utils drawer is visible and clic on the Install icon. Single floppy users wi have a bit of disk swapping to g through, but otherwise the printer drive will work fine.

If any problems crop up during insta lation, reboot with your Workbench dis open a Shell window and type (one line):

```
COPYCOVERDISK37:UTILITIES/CANONBJ10_UTILS/
CANONBJ10 TO DEVS:PRINTERS
```

Workbench 2.04 users who wish to insta the two prefs programs will need an extr

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26k or so of space on the Workbench disk, and can install the Fontshop and CanonPrefs programs by simply dragging the icons to Workbench's Prefs drawer.

Step two is to run Preferences and select the CanonBJ10 driver, then save out. From now on, your printing problems should be over.

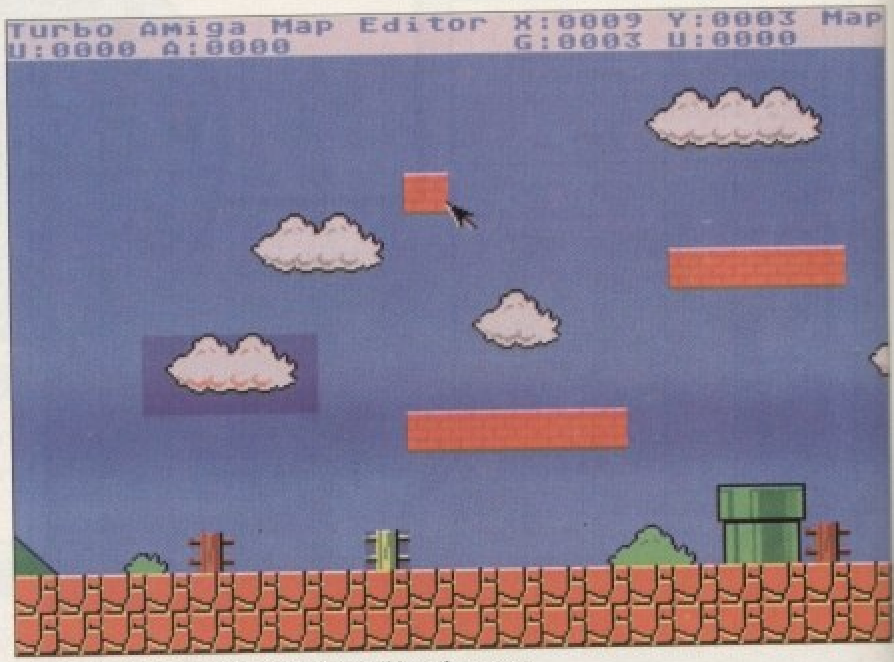
The driver supplied by Wolf Faust offers several major enhancements to anyone who has previously struggled with a non-specific printer driver. Graphic dumps will be quicker, fonts can be automatically downloaded to the printer, margins and page lengths are now totally user-controllable, as are tab settings and greyscale conversion.

Workbench 1.3 BJ10 users will never find a better excuse than the two additional programs to upgrade to the new operating system.

CanonPrefs enables the setting of tab lengths, ideal for printing tables of data, tweaking for greyscale conversion, and that all important top margin, removing that annoying tendency of some printer drivers to refuse to print on a full page.

Fontshop will make the use of custom fonts much easier, and will download the font data to the BJ10 before printing takes place.

Users can select a font, decide whether or not to use it as a proportional font, set the baseline, and cpi (characters per inch) values, then download the entire selection to the Prefs drawer to ensure that each time the BJ10 is used, these settings are also brought into play. No matter which operating system currently skulking in the depths of your Amiga, the Canon BJ10 printer driver will transform the output from your hard copy friend.



Map blocks can be pasted in to quickly build up the scenery

Think you can do better? Want to be famous?

We are always on the look-out for new, quality Amiga programs for the CoverDisk. If you think you have written something good enough for others to share and enjoy, please send it in and we'll have a look.

The *Amiga Computing* CoverDisk is used by thousands of Amiga owners every month in places all over the world from New Zealand to the USA, so if your submission finds its way onto the disk, you could be famous!

Please make sure you list ALL Workbench and other files necessary for the program to work. Feel free to design your own icons for progs which run from Workbench, but please don't make them too big.

If you ensure your program is as compatible as possible with a wide range of Amigas, it will also stand a better chance of publication. We are especially interested in programs designed to work with the A3000, although if they work only with the new machine they'll have to be quite small.

We are prepared to pay our current rates for original work which hasn't been distributed in any other way and which has not been put in the public domain.

If you wish your program to be released as shareware or freeware we will be happy to publish it, but would, of course, be happier if we'd been given it first!

Your submission MUST be accompanied by the submissions form, a copy of it, or a signed declaration to the same effect. Please supply your full name address and phone number.

Unfortunately we cannot undertake to return disks sent to us as the volume of submissions makes this an impractical exercise.

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Type of program: Game ☐ Utility ☐ Tune ☐ Other...

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TAME

Author: Anthony Ball

Turbo Amiga Map Editor is a shareware release of a commercial quality map editor currently being used by a number of software houses to produce maps for platform-style arcade games.

Unlike some shareware releases in this category, it is not crippled by having its save function disabled, but will quit out after 30 minutes or so of use.

The dedicated avoider of shareware duties will get round this by constantly saving out a file, then running the program again, but for all those programmers serious about producing their own platform games, the £50 asking fee for the unrestricted version of this excellent map editor is surely a small price to pay.

Start by loading the program, then push the mouse pointer right to the top of the screen and hold down the right mouse button to reveal the menus. TAME's menus will not appear unless the pointer is at the top of the screen, so bear this in mind.

From the Project menu, choose Auto Load files, then go into the TAME maps directory and click on the file called World00.map. Your screen should now be filled with a map on which to practice the program's features.

Picking up and pasting down blocks at different locations is accomplished with the mouse buttons. Just click with the right mouse button to pick up the block under the pointer's current position, then move it around and paste it down using the left button.

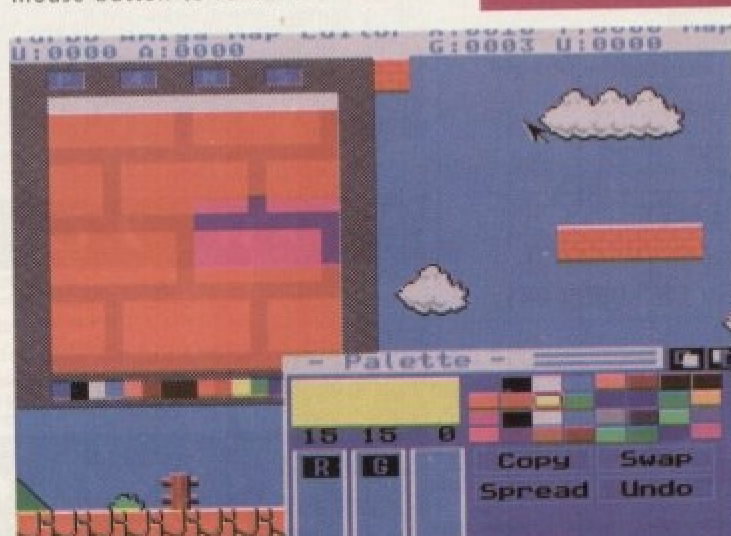
To select any block from the current range of blocks, hold down Amiga-Space to toggle through the Map, Blocks, and Help modes. AC

Quadrix

Workbench 1.3 users who are having problems with the Quadrix game should boot their CoverDisks and

```
CD SYS:GAME-OF-THE-MONTH
LZ E,X QUADRIX.LZH EMPTY:
```

Where EMPTY is a disk you have already formatted and installed a boot block on.



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A list of each and every benefit would simply take up too much space. But one fact is immediately obvious. At just £49.99*, Maxiplan4 makes your money - and your ideas - go far further. It all adds up to yet another hit from The Disc Company... the brains behind the brainiest software!





Kindwords3 gives Amiga's most popular word processor a big boost. For a start, this new version is faster, far more powerful and fantastically friendly. Incorporating the incredible Human Interface Protocol™, it works harder for you. So you don't have to work so hard!

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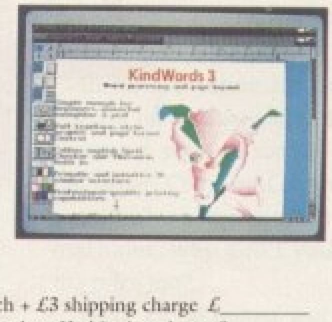
Get to grips with words and graphics instantly. Advantages include automatic text wraparound for pictures. From all graphic file formats of any colour or resolution. Up to 255 fonts per document are available, including high density printing fonts. There's also an expanded British Collins dictionary and thesaurus, on-line help, a WYSIWYG display... and much more. While a digital clock keeps track of time.

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So what's the price of this superior software? That's the best news of all: only £49.99*. Which proves that the best really can cost less! What's more, Kindwords3 also works with Workbench 2.0 (and, of course, 1.3). What else? Check it out right now at your nearest computer store.

* suggested retail price

MaxiPlan4 SPREADSHEET KindWords3 WORDPROCESSOR



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For information call: 0480 496 688; Fax : 0480 494 512

Both upgrades require Amiga 500, 500+, 600, 600 HD, 1000, 2000 or 3000, Workbench 1.3 or 2.0, 1 MB RAM (additional memory recommended). Two Disk Drives or Hard Disk recommended.
Can be upgraded to Kindwords 3.0: Kindwords 1.0, 1.2, 2.0, Publisher's Choice, Home Office Kit, Starter Kit, PowerWorks and other bundle packs containing any version of Kindwords.
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0707 664 684

Q......IS

Q Tower - the next generation of Amiga A500 expansion systems.

CheckMate Digital

The Q Tower system is available in kit form from £449.00 to receive an information pack please contact.....

4



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Ezra Surf's Postbag

Got something to say through the pages of AC? Ezra Surf is our mailman, dedicated to sitting in a corner reading your letters and selecting the most interesting for publication.
Drop him a line at:
Ezra Surf's Postbag, Amiga Computing,
Europa House, Adlington Park,
Macclesfield SK10 4NP.
Please don't enclose saes as Ezra just hasn't got enough paper to reply personally. He might also have to shorten your letters, so don't be offended if you end up getting the chop.

Boring Borland?

Thanks to the AC team for producing such an excellent mag. I have just a few questions, which I hope you will answer.

- Is the Amiga used in any part of the making of *Amiga Computing*?

- Why don't the big PC software companies like Microsoft, Borland, Aldus, and others support the Amiga, even if they just port their programs from the IBM to the Amiga? The Amiga is more than capable of handling them.

- Is it true that Commodore will stop producing the A2000?

A Jam, Kuwait

Amigas are used in almost every aspect of the **Amiga Computing** *production process. All software and hardware is obviously tested on Amigas, all copy is written using Amigas and popular wordprocessors used by thousands of our readers, and all screen grabs are taken straight from Amiga monitors.*

On the down side, it is not possible to lay out the magazine on Amigas, even using the latest Amiga DTP packages. The Europress group is a large and flexible organisation producing a variety of magazines, most of which are not Amiga titles, and as a result it would be wasteful of resources to train specific art editors in the use of specific machines.

As for your second question, large PC-based software houses tend not to port software over to the Amiga because the Amiga market is too small to justify the investment.

This doesn't just affect Amiga owners, however. Quark Xpress is only now appearing in its PC version, despite having been the undisputed king of the Mac DTP packages for some years.

Commodore have already begun to scale down A2000 production, and as far as Britain is concerned at least, they have stopped altogether. The A2000 will not suffer as much as the A500 from the advent of new machines, though, as the new Amigas will almost certainly support the Zorro expansion slot standard.

With continued support from Commodore for Zorro as the industry standard expansion slot, manufacturers are sure to continue releasing products for the A1500/2000.

Shortie

I bet this letter gets printed last. I also have an ST. Do I win £10?

Darren Morris, Bradford

It didn't. You do? No.

A600 hater

Being a devoted reader of *Amiga Computing* for three months now, I among many other readers eagerly awaited details of the "fabulous" A600. I couldn't believe what I read when it finally arrived. The new Amiga would sell at £380 and boast virtually no improvements chip-wise over the A500 Plus.

Additionally, the happy purchaser would get a dubious smart card slot and a funky designer keyboard without a numeric keypad! Future upgrading was to be made impossible through the use of surface mounted chips, and existing peripherals were rendered useless by the omission of a DMA port.

In compensation for this, there are internal hard drives without RAM expansions that seem to soar in price as they get larger. Come on Commodore! If you are bent on downgrading existing machines, why don't you downgrade the price too?

Next, I'll be honest and tell you that 95 per cent of my software is pirated. In my defence, I would like to say that software sellers in Stavanger have a monopoly, and prices are from £30 up.

Also, cracked games are out earlier than originals over here, and often come with cool loading intros and optional trainer modes.

We all know that the vast majority of games released these days aren't worth the money, but to satisfy my conscience ➤

Alien concept

I would like to point out that the bit about Alien 3 in *Gamer* issue 10 was entitled "Hudson! We are leaving!". After watching Aliens again just to make sure, I came to the conclusion that Hick's actual words were "Drake! We are leaving!".

I could be wrong, but I'm pretty sure after watching the film at least 17 times.

Richard Harrison, Banchory

Your letter was passed on to **Gamer** *editor, Dan Whitehead, whose reaction was "what can we do with these people?".*

I think a little artistic licence is in order when you consider how hard our **Gamer** *staff drink, er, work. Besides, are you sure you've got the quote correct? Perhaps a few dozen more viewings are in order...*

Dangerous games

Prize letter

I have been an Amiga owner for five years now, and until recently my trusty A500 1.2 has never given me a single problem. I always expected that something or other would go wrong with my computer sooner or later, despite the care and attention I have given it.

Basically, my internal drive has packed in. I know it's repairable, but it's the way in which it died which is most annoying.

I recently purchased a game, and on loading I noticed that my drive was making a considerable amount of clicking, whirring, and grinding. From my experience, I understand that all this is due to the amount of copy protection placed on disks these days, forcing the drive head to read unusual parts of the disk.

The software did in fact work, but afterwards none of my AmigaDOS disks would work. Even Workbench reported read/write errors.

I have tried re-aligning the drive and cleaning it, but through using a disk sector editor I have deduced that DF0: still refuses to read tracks 78 and 79, which renders most software useless. I can only assume that the ridiculous amount of copy protection on the game disk has destroyed my drive.

Fair enough, five years is a long time for a drive to linger on, but surely copy protection doesn't have to be so intense. Pirates will always find a way around on-disk protection, so why can't software companies think of the health of the disk drive as well?

B J Buckley, Huddersfield

Not a single software house has come clean and admitted that heavy on-disk protection can be detrimental to the health of Amiga floppies, despite the fact that many users have for some time suspected this as a cause of the inordinately high occurrence of internal drive fatalities within the first year or so of an Amiga's life.

Your own internal drive was overdue for replacement when the game in question was used, so it could be a case of the last straw and the camel's back, but there is mounting evidence to suggest that on-disk protection is killing drives like a plague in the height of summer.

What can you do about it? Not a lot, I'm afraid. Until the software industry, perhaps as represented by ELSPA, decides to examine this issue, software houses will continue to be driven by economical considerations and will continue to release games designed to be as difficult to copy as possible.

If this means they damage disk drives, the punter will always blame the game's manufacturer, but remember the pirates who also lie at the root of the problem.

Esp

Where is it?

Your excellent *Amiga Computing* is very hard to find in Poland, but I've bought a few issues which I'm very happy with.

However, the June issue is not available in Cracow, so I was not able to obtain the Superbase instruction booklet. Please let me know where I can get my hands on a copy.

Krzysztof Boligtowa, Cracow, Poland

Back issues can always be ordered from Europress Direct using the form normally printed with the Europress Direct advertisement in each issue. The address to send your order to is:

Europress Direct, Freepost
Ellesmere Port, South Wirral L65 3EB

The order number for the June issue is 9748 and it will cost you £3.10. For readers in Eastern Europe who have difficulties getting copies of the magazine, I'd suggest you post a message in our Classified section appealing for contacts in your area.

In this way, Amiga user clubs can form and grow, and someone in the club is bound to have the issue you're looking for.

➤

I treat pirated games as shareware. I send money to the company involved depending on how much I liked the game. Ingenious, no?

Joris, Hafrsfjord, Norway

Sad attempt to assuage a guilty conscience, yes. Ingenious, no. If the vast majority of games aren't worth the money, why are they still worth pirating? I for one wouldn't play a lousy platform game whether it was free or bought and paid for.

On a brighter note, your objections to the A600 should soon be answered, if only partly. Commodore have just confirmed the A600 price drop, and the machine will now retail at £299 without hard drive.

The company continues to make no excuse for the fact that the A600 is a "closed architecture" Amiga. As far as Commodore is concerned, the A600 is meant to be expanded from the outside and the outside only.

For the foreseeable future, this means we're all pinning our hopes on the PCMCIA smart card slot. With its industry standard architecture offering, in electronic terms, virtually everything a DMA port can do, it should slowly attract a growing number of peripherals.

In response to the growing number of letters we are receiving from FMG customers, we thought a few answers might be in order. Commodore supplied the following information:

- 95-98 per cent of FMG machines were located and dealt with within ten days of the Commodore gaining access to FMG's warehouse.
- All extended three-year warranties taken out with FMG will be honoured by Commodore.
- As there were thousands of machines in FMG's warehouse at any one time, some may turn out to be untraceable for one reason or another. Users whose machines have disappeared should contact Commodore on 0628 770088 and lodge a claim for compensation.

A2000 blues

I'd like to point out to the many A500 owners who've expressed their disappointment with the release of the A600 that they really have nothing to worry about. At least, not in comparison with owners of the A1500/2000. There is a huge A500 user base, and as you have been quick to point out, third-party developers will surely continue to support the machine for some time.

We A1500/2000 owners form a much smaller group, and it is by no means certain that we will continue to enjoy such lasting support.

Many A500 peripherals have taken ages to appear on the A2000, and there are currently no plans to release the CD-ROM drive for my machine. Peripherals are already appearing on the A500 and selling cheaper than their A2000 equivalents, despite having their own cases and PSUs.

With the arrival of the new mid-range Amigas imminent, we have very little to look forward to. It is extremely unlikely that the new chip set will be usable on the A1500, even though Commodore could issue it as a slot in expansion card.

The only consolation we have is that the rumoured replacement will be in a case so thin that it will only have room for two Zorro slots.

Have you noticed how many firms which advertise in Amiga magazines have started to advertise PCs alongside their Amigas? Surely they wouldn't go to such expense if there wasn't a real and significant demand from Amiga owners going over to the PC in disgust at the continued antics of Commodore?

Paul Browne, Bradford

You say that there is a small user base for the more serious Amigas, yet the number of peripherals which can only be used in A1500/2000 machines increases all the time, and the development of serious software more suited to an accelerated A2000 continues apace.

This doesn't indicate to me the death of the A1500/2000. In addition, the new mid-range machines are bound to be priced beyond the pockets of the average A500 owner, which means that the number of new Amigas in the market is unlikely to outstrip the number of A1500/2000s for quite some time.

For these reasons, I'd be very surprised if the existing Amiga workhorse didn't continue to enjoy a healthy existence for at least a few years.

As for certain companies becoming so desperate for sales that they advertise PCs to an Amiga audience, I've not seen one of the ads in question, but wouldn't be surprised if the habit spreads.

PC price cuts make what is really a computing dinosaur with go-faster bits added seem an attractive proposition, but how many Amiga owners faced with enormously expensive software, incompatibility problems, and the basic primitiveness of the PC would go over after a long hard think? Not many.

Speedy service

I have been an Amiga user for a number of years now, mainly in the wordprocessing department. After buying the memory hungry Wordworth wordprocessor, I decided to expand my computer's memory to 2Mb with the Power Computing 1Mb trapdoor card with the connector for existing expansions.

Scraping together the cash, I sent off a cheque, and 36 hours later my board arrived. Great! Some memory at last, I think. However, things did not go to plan, as the connector to my 512k board didn't quite fit, and when it did it wouldn't recognise my battery backed-up clock.

A call to Power Computing's technical helpline advised me to check my original board, and if all else failed to ring back. On ringing back, I was advised to return the 1Mb card for a replacement. This has arrived and is working perfectly in just over one week from my original order being posted.

Can I just say well done and thank you to Power Computing? Why can't all other companies provide the same speedy service?

Ian Hiles, Washington

A lot of the more established Amiga dealers and peripheral companies provide excellent service just as Power Computing do. The problem with letters pages is that we so seldom receive letters from satisfied customers.

Most of the letters we receive concerning after-sales service are of the disgruntled variety, and to print many of them would risk a serious imbalance in the way mail order in general, and some companies in particular, are viewed.

To rectify this situation, the Amiga Market section this month contains a mail order reader survey. I strongly urge anyone who has had dealings with one of our mail order advertisers, whether good bad or indifferent, to complete the survey and return it.

If, and only if, enough readers reply, full survey results will be printed in the Market. This should hopefully pinpoint the good companies and those whose customers are dissatisfied, and if the exercise is successful it will be repeated at regular intervals.

This is your chance to provide some powerful feedback to the mail order people, so if you don't take it you really have only yourself to blame when bad service goes unpunished and good service unrewarded.

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- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

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- Citizen Swift 9 - 9 pin - 80 column
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- 8K Printer Buffer + 3 Fonts
- Parallel Interface
- Graphics Resolution: 240 x 240dpi
- Epson and IBM Emulation
- FREE Colour Kit
- FREE Silica Printer Starter Kit

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SAVING: £113
SILICA PRICE: £189

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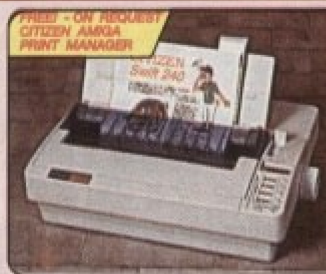
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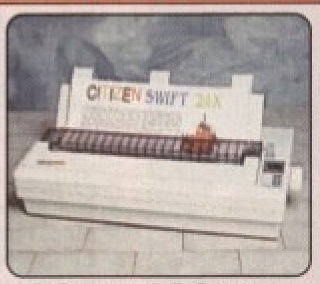


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- Colour Option Available
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AMIGA A600 THE WILD, THE WEIRD AND THE WICKED PAC

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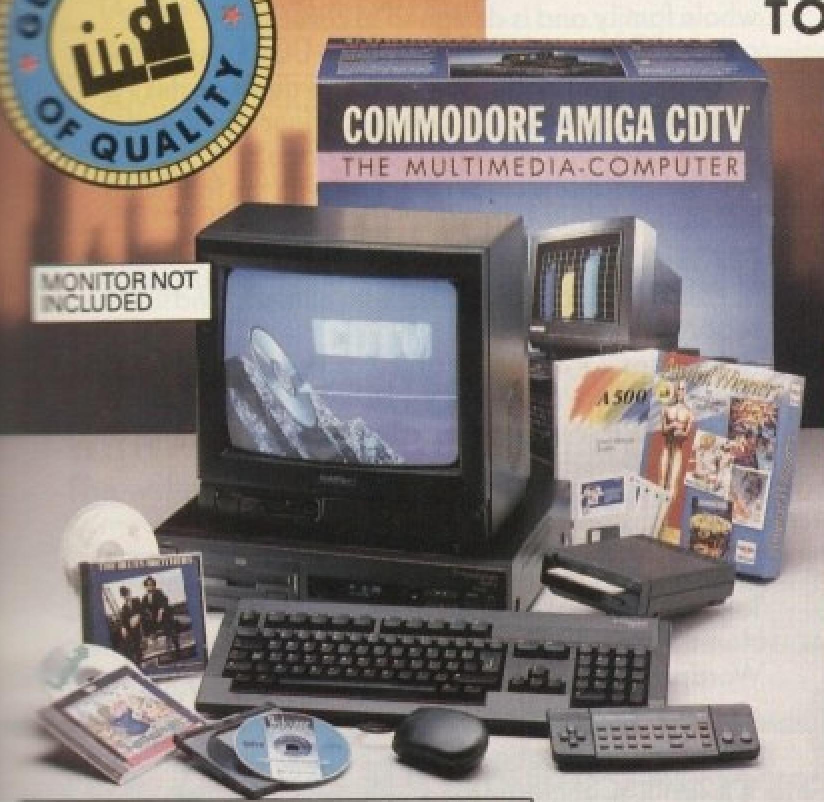
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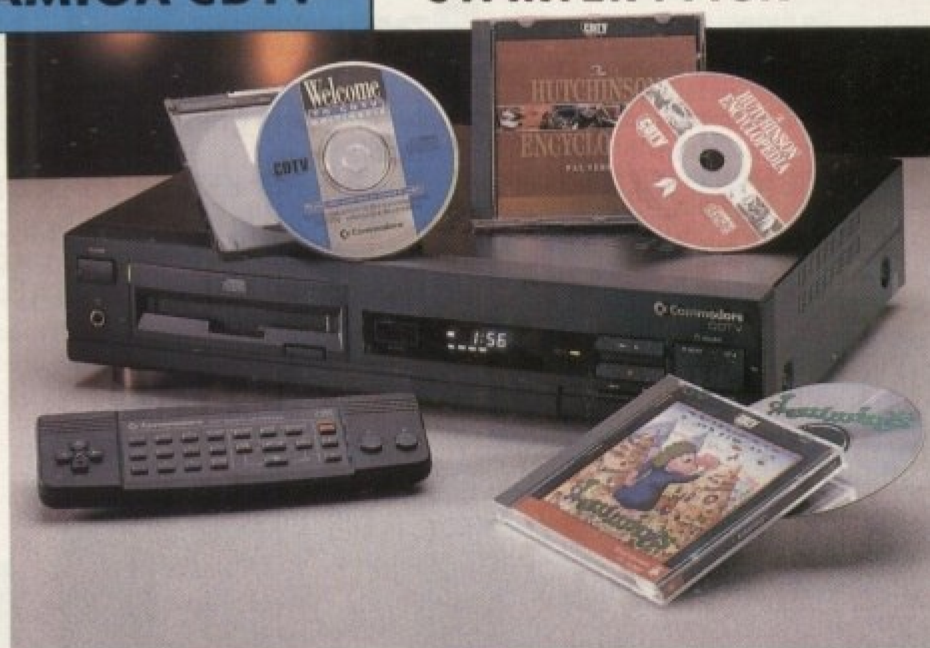
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CDTV | SOFTWARE



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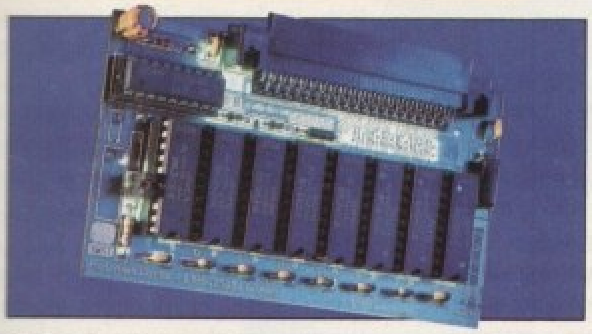
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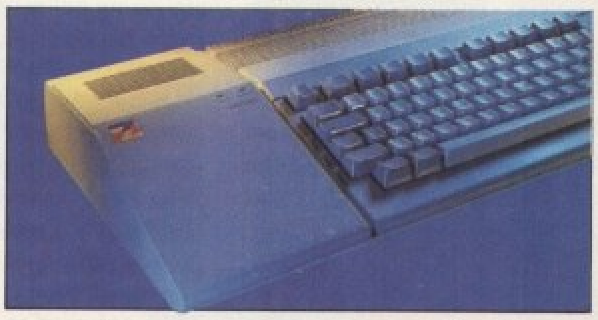
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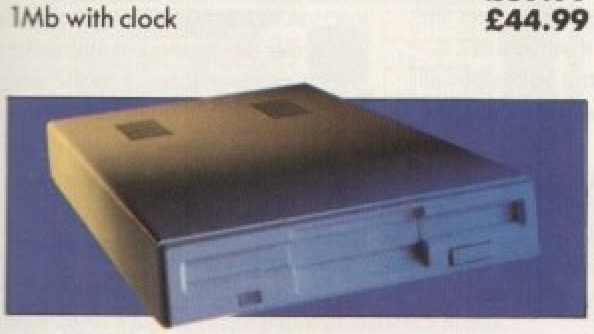


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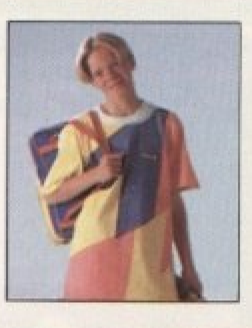
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Smooth

It's possible to print out your carefully designed graphics without them becoming blotchy images of their former glorious selves. Ben Pointer looks at two revolutionary structured drawing packages

Painting programs are fine for creating graphics for games, presentations, slide shows and anything else that is going to be displayed on the screen, but if your ultimate aim is to print a graphic then you'll probably already know that these so-called bitmapped graphics tend to look quite bad on paper because of the low resolution at which they are created.

Sometimes reducing the scale can enhance the printed appearance of a bitmapped graphic, but reducing the scale, of course, reduces the size.

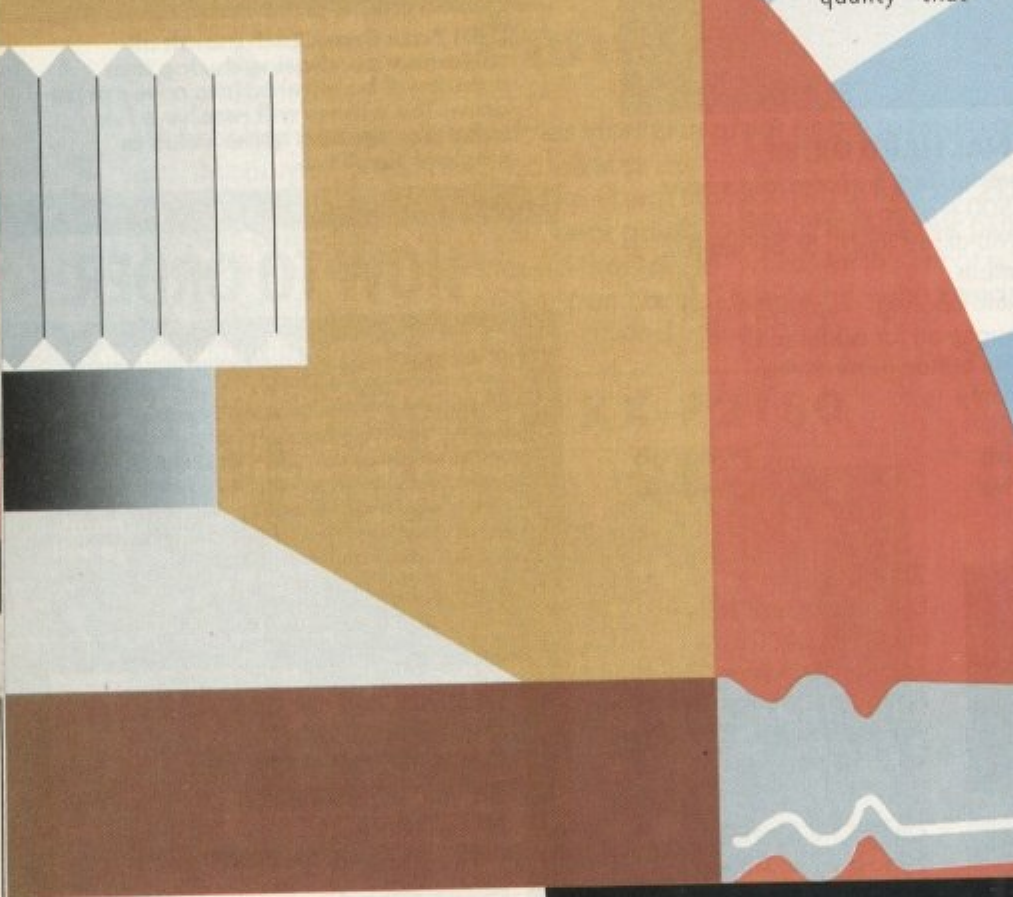
A better way to create graphics that are to be printed – for inclusion in a desktop published document, for example, or perhaps a technical drawing – is to use a structured drawing package. Structured, or vector, drawings have an advantage over bitmapped graphics in that the lines and shapes that comprise the graphic are held in memory as a series of mathematical equations.

This means that mathematical operations can be performed upon them to achieve all sorts of special effects, including making them bigger and smaller, and it also means that they can be printed at your printers' highest resolution capable of the printer connected to the computer is capable of.

There's a great example of the quality that can be achieved with structured drawings on the cover of Issue 51 (August) of *Amiga Computing*. That graphic of the scales is a structured drawing.

If you turn to page 22/23 of that issue you'll see the graphic again, but this time much reduced. Notice that in both pictures all the curves remain smooth. The graphic is used yet again, in silhouette form, in the "Our Choice" panels.

The same graphic, three different sizes, all with smooth curves. You can't do that with bitmapped graphics.



Nondescript

One way of creating structured drawings is a little like modelling clay, where you start with a nondescript lump and mould it into a recognisable object by kneading and shaving it, adding more clay here and there where required.

You can do a similar thing with any structured shape. A rectangle, for example, does not need to remain a rectangle – once you have created it you can pull it about and work on it until it looks like something else.

All Control points at four corners can be moved to change its shape, and if you decide you want a kink in one side then a control point can be added between two others, which can then itself be moved around.

Curved lines are defined by four control points – two anchor points at either end of the curve, and two in-between which attract the line between the anchors like magnets, and so pull it into a curve.

Again, these control points can all be moved in order to mould the be moved in order to mould the curve the way you want it.

Drawing pictures in this manner takes a deal of getting used to, especially if you've become accustomed to the way art packages like Deluxe Paint work, so the more the program can do to help you in the way of automatic processes and special effects, the easier the transition will be.

ProVector

The developers of ProVector are also the inventors of the IFF–DR2D structured drawing standard. As ILBM is to Amiga bitmapped graphics and 8SVX is to Amiga sound samples, so DR2D is to Amiga structured drawings. Drawings created with ProVector are saved as DR2D.

Other products that support DR2D include the Saxon Publisher and PageStream desktop publishing programs. Gold Disk's Professional Page and PageSetter II programs don't want anything to do with DR2D, preferring that company's own "clip" format as created with Professional Draw.

Drawings are created in ProVector using a small number of tools for basic shapes – ellipse, rectangle, polygon and smooth polygon, straight and curved lines, and freehand.

Line weight and colour are normally selected before drawing an object. Weights are always specified in inches and/or fractions of inches, to five decimal places, and can be any thickness from nothing right up to several million inches.

Joined

There are five styles of line, and lines can be joined together with mitred, bevelled or rounded corners. Colours for lines or fills are chosen from a palette of 256.

Each has an RGB value ranging from 0,0,0 (black) to 255,255,255 (white), or you can specify CMY (cyan, magenta, yellow) values from 0 to 100 per cent. should you prefer this method. A maximum of colours can be displayed on the screen, coloured dither patterns are used to approximate the rest.

Many people may have no use for colour as they may be printing to mono

operators



In ProVector the User menu is filled with commands of your own invention utilising the power of ARexx, its equivalent of Professional Draw's genies, but nowhere near as user-friendly

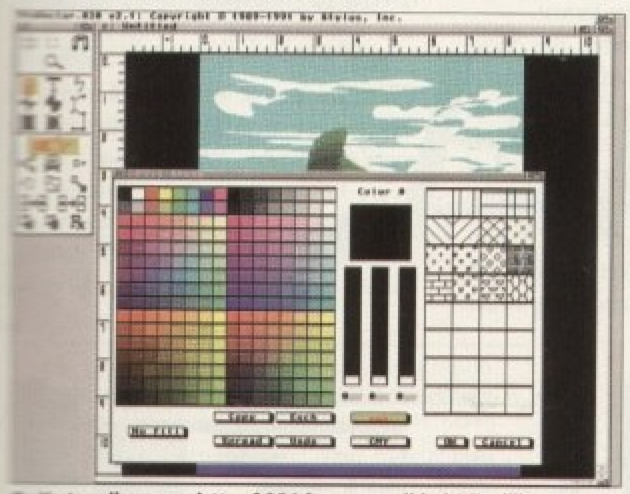
devices, in which case a Mono option can be selected to turn the palette automatically into 256 dithered shades of grey.

Dithering can slow down the program, so this can be turned on and off at will, and the depth of the screen can be changed at any time to 1, 2, 3 or 4 bitplanes (2 to 16 colours).

ProVector works very much faster in two-colour mode, and the best productivity choice is a depth of one, with dithering turned on.

As well as fill colours, ProVector supports fill patterns. There are 16 predefined patterns, and room for a further 16 of your own creation. As with lines and fills, fill patterns can be in any colour from the palette of 256.

ProVector has the usual selection of basic structured drawing object manipulation tools. Any number of objects can be grouped temporarily by activating the Selection tool and dragging a box around them. For manipulation purposes, while this group is selected it is treated as a single object.



ProVector allows a palette of 256 from a possible 16.7 million. Dithering is used on-screen to simulate the colours. Note the fill patterns, something which Professional Draw lacks

Clicking on the Group tool would turn the individual objects in the group into one object. For example you could draw a face bit by bit, where the head, eyes, and so on are all individual objects, and once it is finished you could group everything together so that the face becomes a single object.

The objects that comprise the face cannot then be edited – any changes made, like line weights or fill colours, would operate on the whole group. Groups can be ungrouped at any time should you need to make further changed to individual objects.

A Magnify tool will zoom in to an area as small as 6/1000ths of an inch for detailed work, and you can move around the page while magnified with either the window sliders or the cursor keys.

Talking of keys, now might be a good time to mention that ProVector has an enormous number of single-key short-cuts that operate in much the same way as those in Deluxe Paint.

Pressing m, for example, activates the Move tool, while M activates the Magnet tool; c activates Clone, C activates Change. The line weight of the selected object(s) can be changed by typing the number and then pressing w.

Any experienced Deluxe Paint user will tell you that these single-key short-cuts can greatly accelerate the rate at which you work.

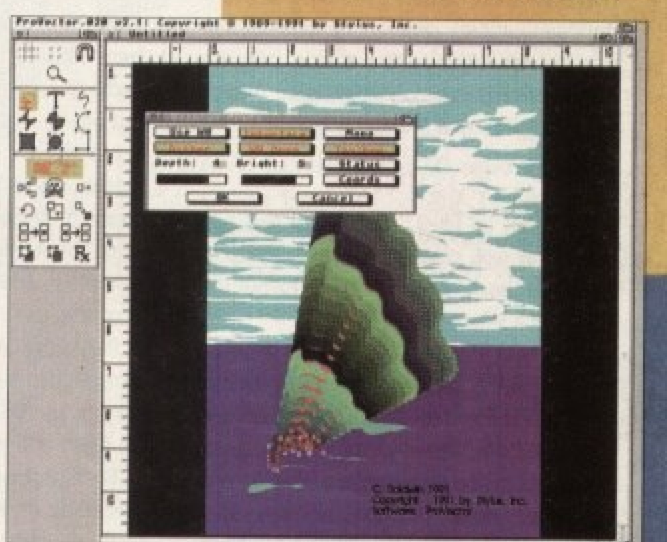
The Clone tool duplicates the currently selected object or group, but there is no facility provided to step-and-repeat, thus allowing you to duplicate a single object many times in one swoop.

The Scale tool is a little better endowed, having a number of controls that allow for more accurate scaling than doing it by eye. The Rotate tool has similar controls, letting you specify about which point the object should be rotated, and allowing the object to be cloned at the same time.



With the additional PSImport module ProVector will enable you to import and edit Encapsulated PostScript clip art

If two objects overlap, then one has to be "behind" the other. If several objects overlap, then there has to be a "depth" order. The natural order is objects drawn later are placed "on top of" objects drawn earlier, but this can be adjusted by means of the Front and Back tools, and also the Layers requester.



ProVector's display preferences can be altered at any time, which allows you to work in black-and-white for speed and then quickly flip to colour to check your progress

Creating layers in ProVector is like placing an invisible sheet between groups of objects. Objects drawn on top of this sheet may obscure part of the drawing underneath, but because the sheet is on top of them the objects underneath cannot be altered or edited.

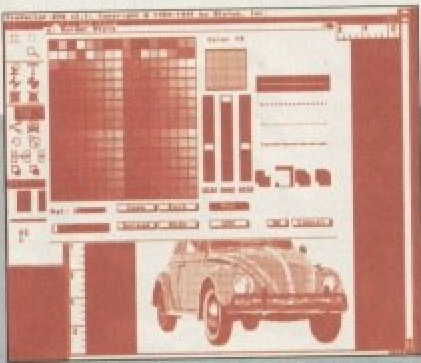
Any layer can be locked, hidden or made the current layer at any time, and any layer can be moved up one level, down one level, to the front or to the back.

One feature we've not talked about yet is the Text tool. This supports two types of font, "stroke" and "outline".

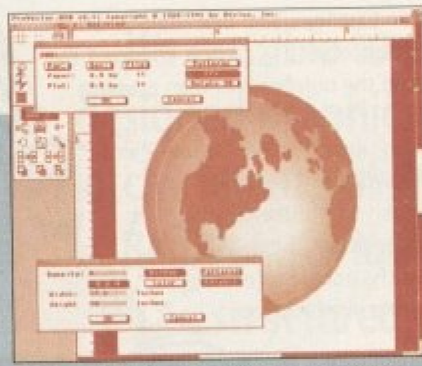
Stroke fonts are simple, ➤



The two types of fonts ProVector uses are specific to that program. If you want fancy fonts you'll need to buy the PSImport module and use that to convert Adobe Type 1 fonts



ProVector works much more quickly in two–colour mode. Dithering can be used to enable you to tell the difference between colours on–screen



ProVector's PostScript output requester (top) makes no allowances for colour separations, assuming you will be importing into a DTP package and separating from there

unfilled characters composed of single–weight straight and curved lines; as such they are ideal for plotter output, and six of these are provided – Simple, Serif, Sans, Cyrillic, Greek and English.

Two outline fonts are provided – Roman and Sans – and these are more like the Compugraphic or Adobe fonts you would use for desktop publishing. But they are in ProVector's own format; the program cannot use Compugraphic fonts, although an additional PSImport module can be bought which can convert Adobe Type 1 fonts to the format ProVector uses.

Baseline

Text can be filled, outlined, scaled and rotated at will, plus there is the facility to force the baseline of the text to follow the curves of a selected object.

Any text editing is done in a small one–line string gadget rather than directly onto the screen, so multiple lines of text can only be achieved by typing and positioning each line one at a time.

There is no text import facility, but all text remains editable even after it has been placed on the page. Text can be turned into objects if you want, allowing you to alter the shapes of individual characters.

ProVector supports ARexx, and a few macros are supplied that add to the program's power by doing more complicated jobs automatically by using several built–in tools.

The ARexx macros can be placed in a special User pull-down menu, and already in there you'll find some functions that do jobs as simple as centring an object to as complex as performing a gradient fill.

Often parameters will be needed to perform a function – for instance, the gradient fill needs to know the start and end colours – and these are elicited from you by means of a simple requester.

You don't get any help with these macros – although the manual describes all of ProVector's ARexx commands fully, there is no documentation as to how these ready–to–use macros work, so you have to find out by trial and error.

No doubt some powerful features indeed could be added to ProVector by means of ARexx macros – but to be able to write them you have to know ProVector intimately, and how to program in ARexx of course.

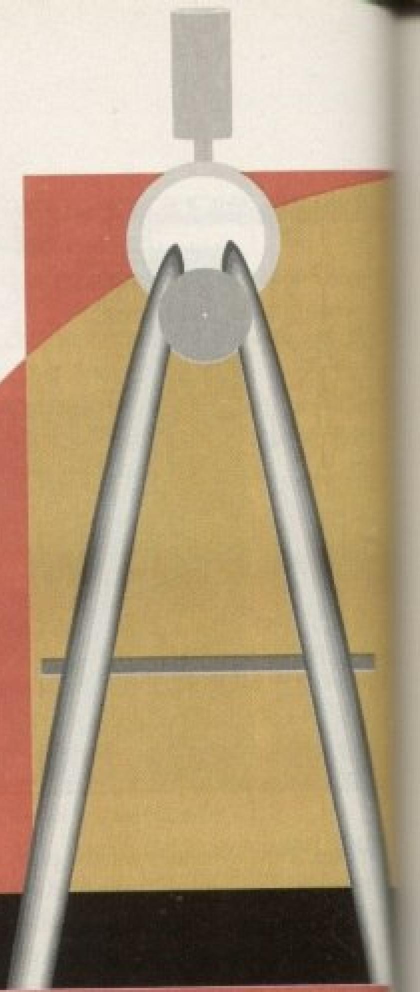
ProVector can output the page – or any part of the page – to any Preferences printer, to HPGL plotters, as an IFF–ILBM file (with dithered colours if required), and as PostScript or Encapsulated PostScript to SER:, PAR: or disk, with an option to rotate by 90 degrees.

Importing

Probably ProVector's best feature comes with the additional PSImport module, which allows you to import and fully edit Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) files, which is in effect the industry standard for desktop publishing clip art, plus it gives you the ability to convert Adobe Type 1 fonts to ProVector's font format. PSImport has a few limitations because the DR2D standard has not yet caught up with the EPS standard, the most important of them being that PostScript clipping paths are not supported, which means that patterned fills in EPS files may spill out into the main drawing unless you specify No Patterns when importing. Stylus is improving DR2D to support clipping paths.

The other major drawback is with the font conversion, which doesn't support hinting or kerning, although this can be worked around by kerning by hand and by using the extra Fast Floating Point version of ProVector for printing graphics that includes text in small point sizes.

As well as this FFP version, an optimised 680x0 version is provided for Amiga 3000 users or anyone who owns an accelerator board.



ProVector 2.1
Stylus Inc (0101) 303 484 7321
No UK distributor as yet
Price: TBA

PSImport
Stylus Inc (0101) 303 484 7321
Price: TBA

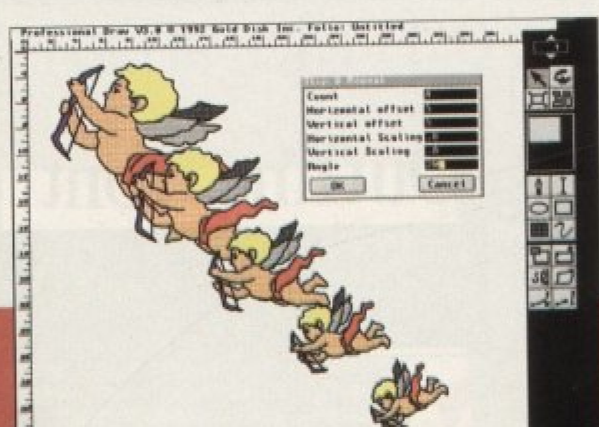
Professional Draw

Professional Draw loads and saves files in three formats. The whole document, which may contain more than one page with many objects on them, is saved in folio format; each page, which may contain many objects, can be saved in page format.

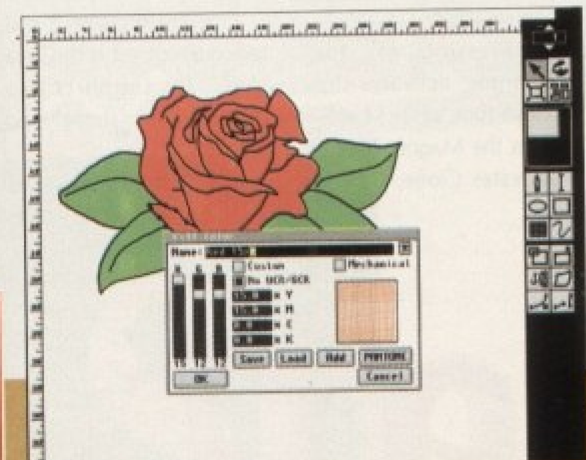
And pages may be imported into documents; groups of objects that form individual drawings may be saved as clips, and groups of related clips may be saved together in one file which can be imported into Professional Draw (of course), Professional Page, PageSetter II and PageStream (but not ProVector). Although Professional Draw is a standalone structured drawing package, it can also be considered an extension to the Professional Page desktop publisher.

The look and feel of both programs, and the way in which they are operated, is very similar – exactly the same in many cases – and there is a hotlink between v3 of the two packages that allows clips imported into Professional Page to be sent directly to Professional Draw for editing and then back again to Professional Page.

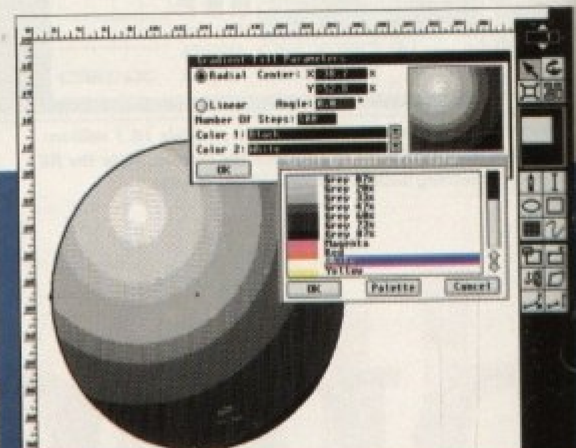
Both programs need to be running for this to work, so at least 3Mb of memory is required, although 5Mb or 6Mb would be more comfortable. While it's not a feature every home user will be able to take advantage of, power users will find it saves a lot of time faffing about with defining, saving and importing clips. Just like



Using Professional Draw's ARexx genies, complex tasks can be achieved more easily. Wireframe – no fills or line weights – and Black–and–White modes help to speed calculations and screen refreshes



Tints of already–defined colours are easy to create in Professional Draw by adding a percentage figure to the name. The palette can contain up to 65,000 colours, about 1,000 of which can be simulated on–screen by colour dithering



Linear and radial gradient fills are new to version 3 of Professional Draw

Due for release during September 1992

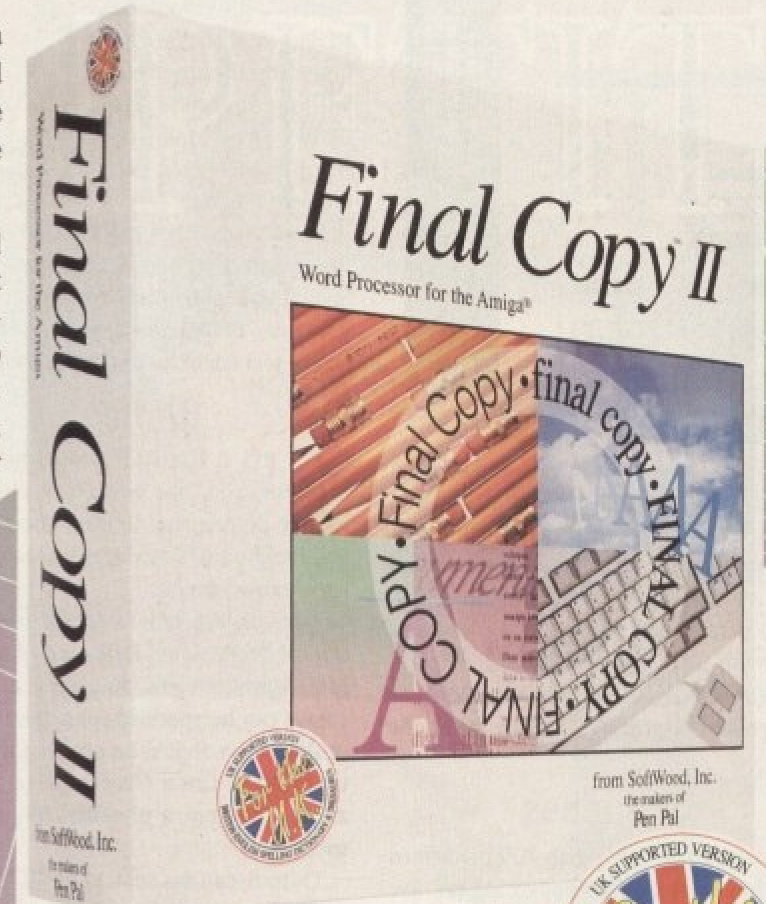
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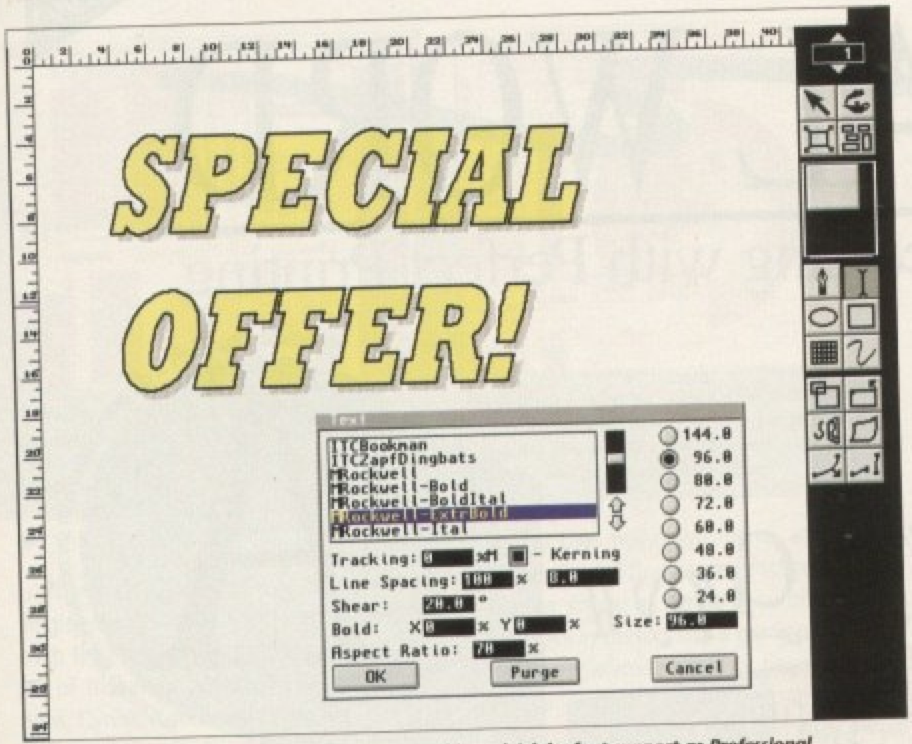
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AMS



Professional Draw now has the same Compugraphic and Adobe font support as Professional Page. Text can be typed directly on to the page or imported from file into a designated area

ProVector, Professional Draw has the full complement of basic drawing and manipulation tools, plus a few that ProVector lacks.

Probably the most fascinating of these extras is the Distortion tool, which lets you pull the hell out of any object or group. ProVector will allow you to shear (slant) objects, Professional Draw can do this too, and it can also distort the perspective, making it dead easy to draw something flat and then distort it to give the drawing some depth.

The results aren't always what you might expect, but after a while you get a feel for the technique and can pretty much guess how much to distort by in order to create the effect you want. Colours in Professional Draw are specified as RGB values of 0 to 15 each, allowing for the standard Amiga 4,096 colours in total, or you can use YMCK (yellow, magenta, cyan, black) percentages. This gives a theoretical maximum palette of 100 million, although only (only!) up to 65,000 colours can be defined and present in the requester at one time.

Pantones

A database of more than 700 predefined "Pantone" colours is supplied. Again, like ProVector, Professional Draw uses dithered colours to simulate a large number of colours on-screen – about 1,000.

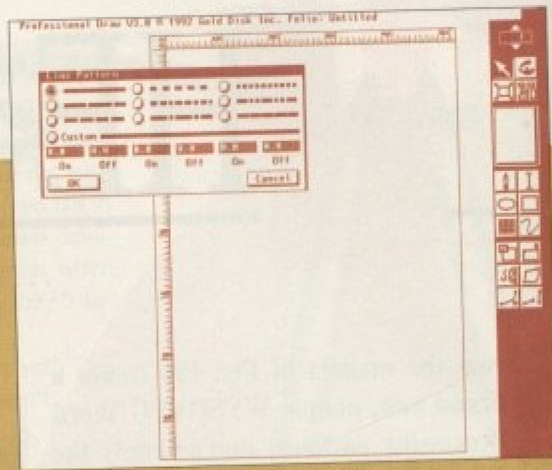
Tints of colours can be quickly defined in Professional Draw by entering a percentage after the name of a predefined colour – "Green 50%" for example. The program does the rest. The colour facilities are one of Professional Draw's strongest suits.

Text is another strong suit. Compugraphic fonts are supported directly, and a utility is provided which can convert Adobe Type 1 fonts to Compugraphic. Tracking and kerning options are provided, and because text is typed directly on to the page you may also specify a line spacing figure.



Text can be made bold in the horizontal and/or vertical directions, and its aspect ratio can be altered in order to create wider or narrower characters. On top of this, facilities are provided via an ARexx macro to import a text file directly into an area on a page.

Gold Disk has christened these ARexx macros "genies". It's very difficult to explain to you how impressive these genies are without sounding like a Gold Disk salesman. Magnificent would be an understatement.



Professional Draw has six pre-defined line patterns plus a facility to create your own

More than 30 are provided, all of them useful and described fully in the manual. Should you wish to modify one or create your own, Professional Draw has a built-in simple text editor for just this purpose.

Genies

But this is the stuff programming is made of, and, like with ProVector, you have to be prepared to learn about ARexx and Professional Draw if you want conjure up your own genies.

Two major additions to this latest version of Professional Draw are linear and radial gradient fills. Any start and end colour can be specified, plus the number of steps there should be between the two, up to 2000. Linear fills can be set to any angle, the centre of radial fills can be specified.

Output can be sent to HPGL plotter, any Preferences printer, although imported EPS graphics will only be printed to PostScript devices – and PostScript output facilities are truly superb, including the ability to create three-colour or four-colour separations or output direct to a colour PostScript device.

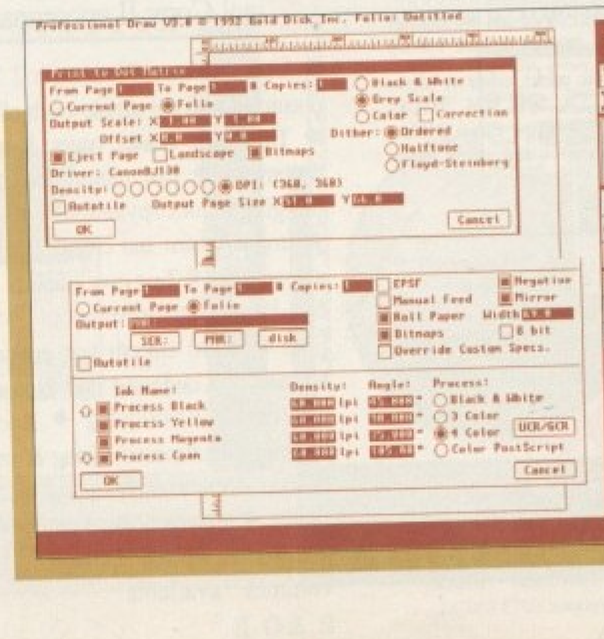
Should the need arise, ILBM graphics can be used in your work, and sent to the printer, including 24-bit ILBM; ProVector will let you import ILBM graphics, but won't let you print them, the thinking being that all you'll really be wanting to do is load a piece of bitmapped clip art and use the structured drawing tools to trace over the top of it. Talking of tracing, Professional Draw comes with a separate Trace program that automates this bitmap tracing process. It screws up sometimes, it can take what seems like for ever, and it can produce massive and highly complex structured drawings that take an age to import and render... but it's there if you need it.

Unlike the ProVector manual, which is certainly comprehensive but, probably as a consequence, a bit confusing for beginners, the Professional Draw manual is written for the most part in simple English and includes a tutorial.

When writing about two programs that are clear rivals, it's impossible after using them for a while not to form an opinion as to which you think is the best.

The only real advantages ProVector has over Professional Draw are its fill patterns – which Professional Draw completely lacks – and the ability to import and edit EPS files with the additional PSImport module. In almost every other department Professional Draw seems to be at least one step ahead. AC

Professional Draw 3.0
Gold Disk Inc Tel: 0753 6866000
Available from HB Marketing
Price: £132.78



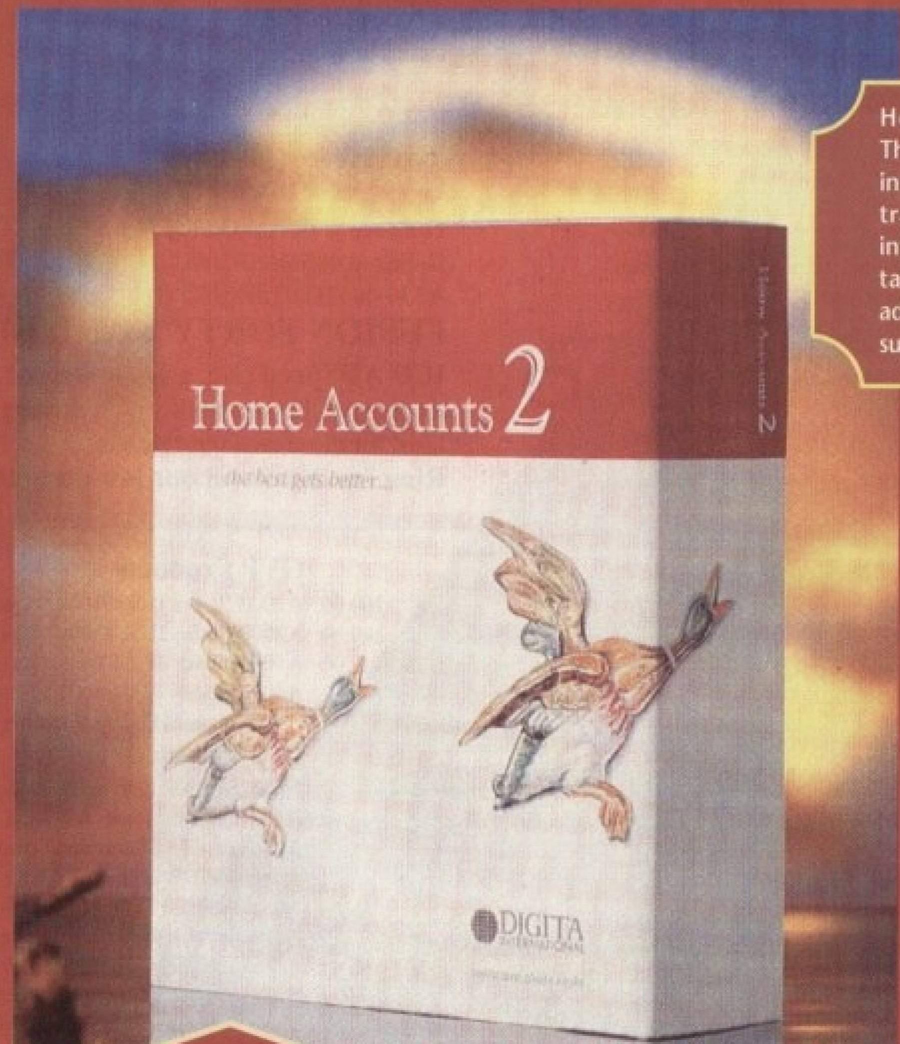
As well as printing to dot matrix (top) and PostScript (bottom), Professional Draw can drive HPGL plotters

Over £1000 worth of superb software to be won

COMPETITION

There's something very special (and exclusive) going on with Home Accounts 2 in next month's *Amiga Computing*. Buy next month's issue – or you'll regret it!

Home Accounts 2 is a powerful package that can transform the day–to–day handling of your personal finances. It can genuinely help you to control spending and plan ahead. It's highly impressive, and we've got 20 to give away. All you have to do is fill in the entry form!



Home Accounts is now even better. There's no restrictions on the number of income accounts, expenditure types and transactions. As well as a pop up and interest calculator there is an option to take account of inflation. They've also added Human Interface Protocol which is superb.

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- Icons for major functions

Graphics

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- Line graphs
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- Graphs are self–scaling to fit

Printing

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- Full report searching

ENTRY FORM

All you have to do is answer the question, and give your name and address. Easy!

Question

Which of the following is not a use of Home Accounts 2?

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Hair restoration ☐

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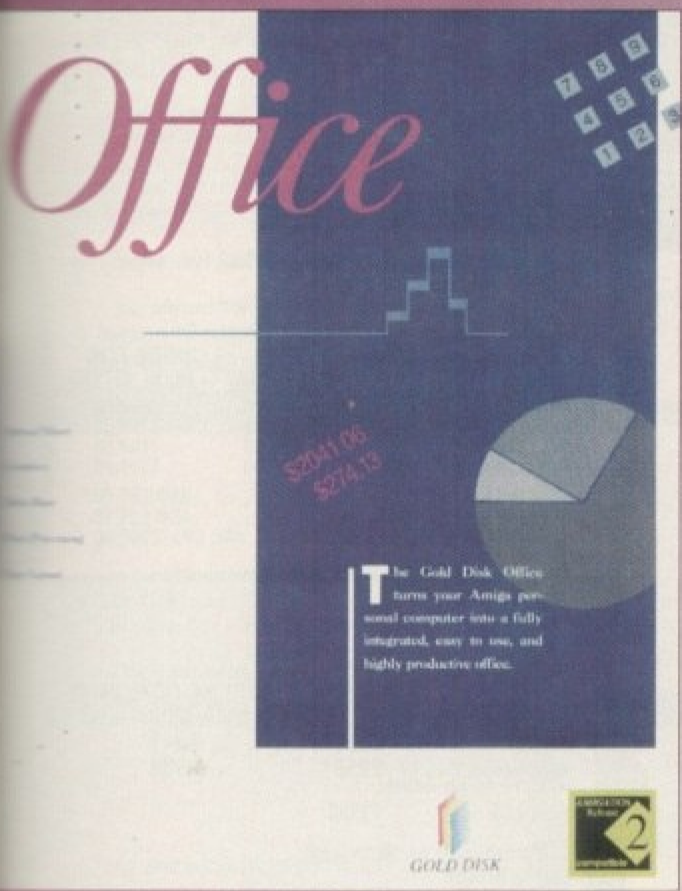
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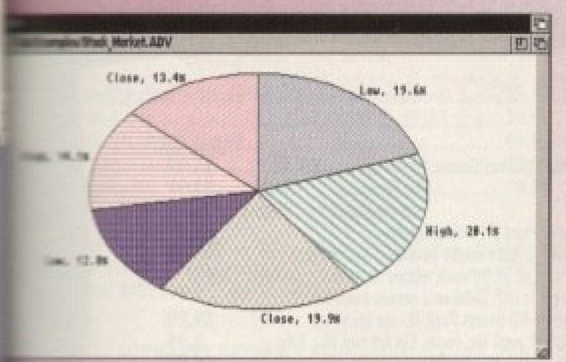
And you'll be pleased to know that we've got five fabulous packages to give away.

Using the programs in Office you can cover all of the operations required for almost any project you may encounter.

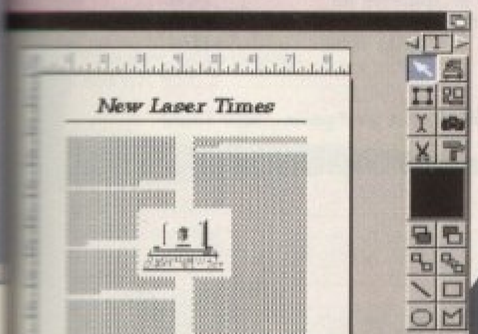
Figures and projections produced with Calc can be turned into visually striking graphs and then imported into Page to integrate with a document to create a brochure or presentation.

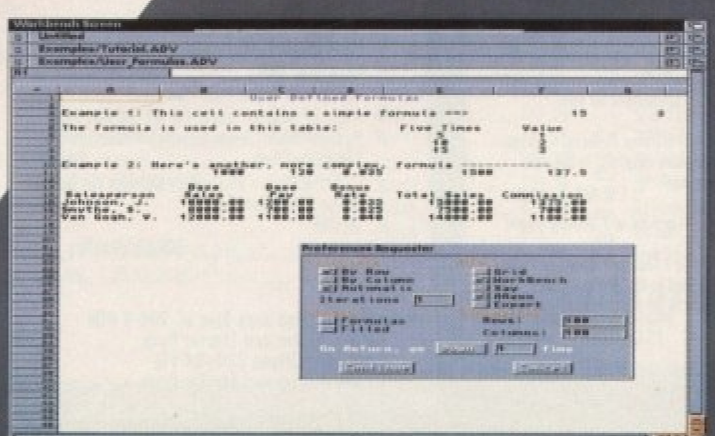
While working on the document, you may prefer to edit large amounts of text using Write, which works together with Page and pops up whenever you need it.

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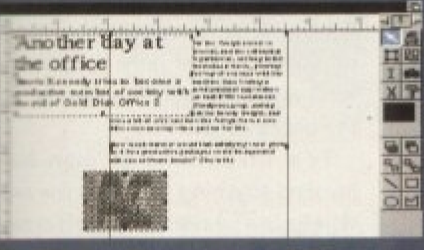
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AMC11

Pages with power

PageSetter, the system at the heart of the original GDO's Page utility, is dead and buried as far as modern DTP goes – even base-level home DTP. PageSetter 2, however, upon which the new Page layout program is firmly based, is another kettle of fish.

By far the most powerful feature to be included is full support for PostScript printing from within the program. Through the use of PostScript and a local laser bureau, any GDO2 user can produce documents to rival the quality, if not the design flexibility, of full price DTP systems. Where Page scores highly is in its user-friendliness and its compatibility with external data types.



Knocking together newsletters and other complex documents is possible with Page

Users can choose to import IFF graphics or ProDraw structured clips, text from Wordperfect 4, Scribble, TextCraft, or any Ascii file, and there is a direct link (a "hot link") to Office Write for on-the-page editing.

Two Compugraphic outline fonts are provided, the usual Times and Triumvirate, but there's no sign of the Font Manager supplied with ProPage and ProDraw to enable users to convert Adobe format fonts for use in the package.

This will initially hamper creativity until extra fonts can be purchased from one of the companies presently offering fonts disks.

Layout tools are basic but adequate, with support for as many columns as desired, text flow around graphics, and the rotation of page elements.

In addition, the selection of the text tool will enable a menu selection, Write, to send the complete document to the Office Write wordprocessor (assuming the latter is running in the background).

Once there, the text can be edited quickly and easily, then returned to Page via the Send Text Home menu option. Switching back to Page reveals the freshly updated document.

Apart from the lack of dot matrix landscape printing and the absence of Font Manager, there is little on which to fault Page without being incredibly picky, especially when you consider the fact that it comes as part of a bundle.

It is easy to use, capable of excellent output, and powerful enough for most home and small business uses.

Another day at the office

Stevie Kennedy tries to become a productive member of society with the aid of Gold Disk Office 2



For the Amiga owner in general, and the enthusiast in particular, nothing better promotes a warm, glowing feeling of oneness with the machine than finding a solid practical application for that £400 investment.

Wordprocessing, sorting out the family budget, and even a bit of DTP can turn the Amiga from a nice little electronic toy into a partner for life.

How much warmer would that satisfying inner glow be if five productive packages could be squeezed into one software bundle? This is the question many a marketing bod must have posed a few years ago if the explosion of "office" packages was much to go by, and among the titles spawned by the great niche hunt of 1989 was Gold Disk Office.

Rough and ready

Combining a very basic wordprocessor, a simple database, a spreadsheet, a graph drawing utility, and the rough and ready PageSetter page layout tool, Gold Disk Office was hardly the most sophisticated package in the world, but it was all there.

GDO's mixture and range of features set the standard for such packages, and it is a standard which, with the release of Mini Office and GDO2, has only recently been surpassed. Probably the most damaging drawback of the original GDO was that the individual elements were weak. Luckily, the degree of integration between them helped the whole to outstrip considerably the sum of the parts, but this often failed to temper the disappointing impression of, say, the so-called wordprocessor.

With the second release, Gold Disk have taken note of the glaring weaknesses in the original and reworked most of the component parts to the extent that they no longer resemble their ancestors. Page, Graph and Calc have been transformed, and File has been given a facelift, but poor old Write still looks like a pensioner at an all-night rave – sad and out of place.

Appealing

For home users and small businesses with undemanding requirements, GDO2 is a full order of magnitude more appealing than its predecessor. However, it still runs the danger encountered by any integrated package in that there may be little or no market for it. Instant appeal generated by the seemingly good value offered ➤

Pies and scatters

Graphs and charts are an inevitable part of all decent business presentations these days, and no self-respecting business person would be without the odd pie chart or sales graph when attempting to make an impression on a new client or the boss.

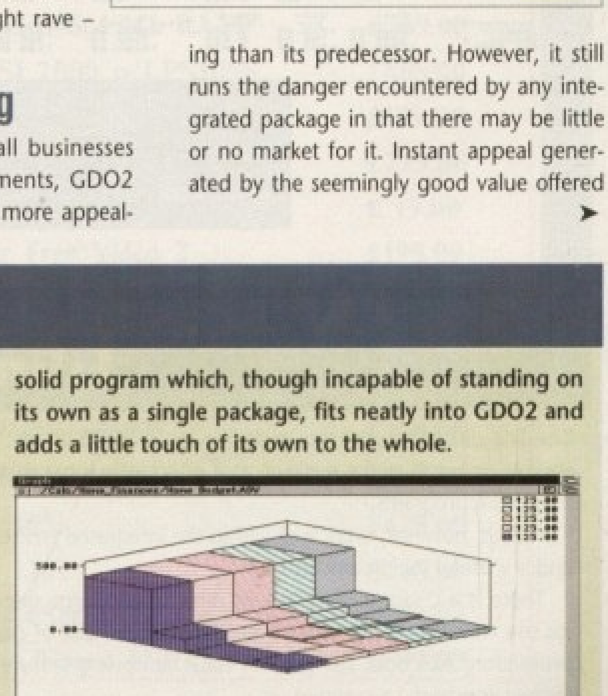
Office Graph is a fairly simple program, but capable of providing the goods, especially when used in conjunction with Page and a PostScript laser printer.

All graphs and charts can be saved in ProDraw clip format for import to Page, and the combination of structured art and a decent printer makes making an impression a certainty. Ten different charts and graphs are on offer, including scatter graphs, pie charts, and 3D variations to ensure that documents won't look tired or too similar.

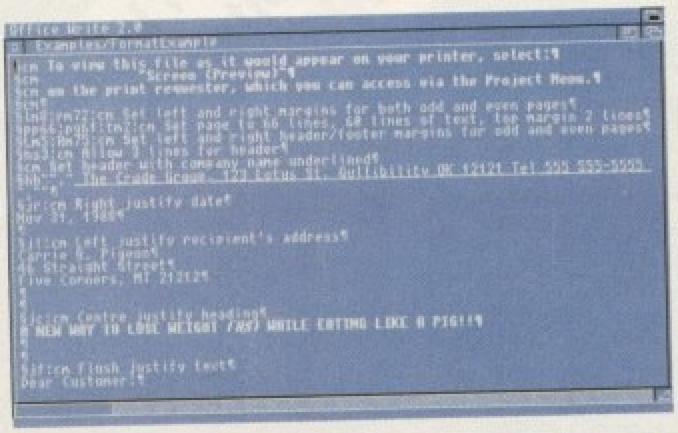
Each new chart is user-tweakable through control of colours, patterns, and fonts used for the various headings and sub-headings.

In addition, pie charts can be exploded, legends can be enabled or disabled, footers can be added, and almost every other main feature, including axes and grids, can be toggled on or off. The program also accepts data ranges saved directly from Calc.

Flexible and useful with little fuss, Office Graph is a solid program which, though incapable of standing on its own as a single package, fits neatly into GDO2 and adds a little touch of its own to the whole.



Graph can produce a variety of results



Not exactly inspiring by modern standards, Write is still an invaluable part of GDO2

Write and Spell

Office Write has been improved somewhat since its first appearance, but it remains an old-fashioned and outdated wordprocessor which, if it didn't appear in an office bundle, would sink without trace.

As an element of GDO2, however, Write is paradoxically the most useful, as just about every other element will either hotlink to it directly or can use its output.

A rather basic wordprocessor which struggles to avoid the damning label "text editor" thus becomes an essential and integral part of the GDO2 package.

Editing options include the usual cut and paste, find, replace, and word count, with the addition of the little seen case convert and join/split lines.

Documents can be merged together and a spell check is available when Office Spell is running in the background. There is also a facility for automatic index generation, a surprisingly powerful feature given Write's basic format.

➤

by five packages in one will certainly sell GDO2 to some, but at around £90 it is close to the full cost of buying one high quality package.

Users who need just one facility might be tempted to go for GDO2 and get the other four free, but those who make a careful choice could well decide that the individual element they are interested in isn't strong enough to justify the purchase. This leaves the small business market and the home user who needs at least two or more of the applications offered by GDO2.

For these Amiga owners, the only package presently to compete in terms of price and features with the Gold Disk offering is Mini Office Amiga, reviewed in a recent issue of *Amiga Computing*.

Which one wins out in the consumer's mind will be decided in some cases by the toss of a coin and in others by the points each package stresses.

GDO2 has gone for a very Workbench 2.0x look and feel whereas Mini Office is much more colourful and visually orientated. The former has PostScript support through the Page layout utility, and the latter has a much better wordprocessor.

Neither trounces the other in anything approaching a comprehensive fashion.

So is GDO2 worth the money? The answer is a qualified yes. A viable alternative course of action which I for one would be tempted to follow is the shareware/commercial combination.

At £75, a copy of ProWrite 3.2 (or Wordworth with some careful shopping around) is a sound wordprocessor start, easily augmented by one of the superb shareware database and spreadsheet programs on the market.

With PostScript support, such wordprocessors negate the need for a simple page layout tool unless the user has definite DTP requirements.

Level terms

The quality of the better shareware productivity packages is such that they compete on near level terms with the individual GDO2 elements, and with those of its competitor, Mini Office Amiga.

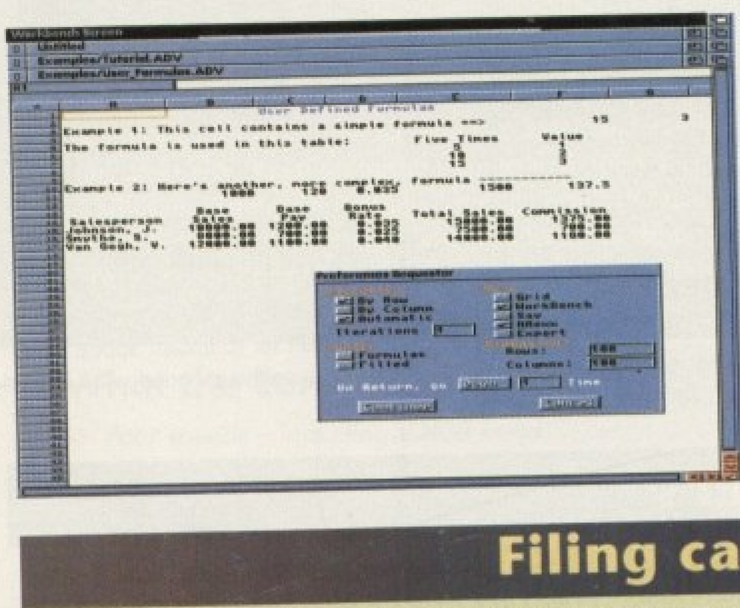
Possibly the only ace left up the sleeve of the bundle packages is then the integration facility, whereby data from a spreadsheet can be fed into the graphs program and so on.

If an integrated environment, whose virtues should not be underestimated, is appealing enough to a large number of potential users, GDO2 will win the day with its high level of inter-program data exchange and its direct hotlinks.

If not, the commercial and shareware alternatives will surely form a well-trodden path for the productivity-minded Amiga owner. AC

Product information

Gold Disk Office 2 is a product of Gold Disk Inc
Supplier: HB Marketing
Phone: 0753 686000
Price: TBA (expected to be around £90)



Caption

Filing cabinet

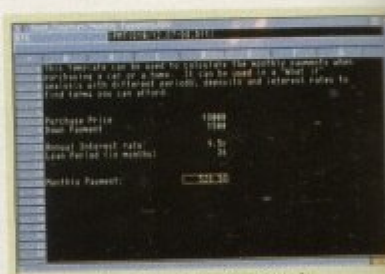
The File database program supplied with GDO2 is one of the weaker elements of the package as it offers little more than some shareware programs.

It does, however, work well within the integrated environment and is a useful tool in any office.

There is a disappointing lack of direct mail merge generation for use with Write, but apart from this and the lack of password protection, File does the job. Its most annoying feature is the clumsy approach to searches.

These have to be accomplished through the use of filters which, though flexible and an essential aid to database management, are a little slow for the user who needs to find one phone number or a company name from a list of hundreds. Prodata's fast find option will search through an entire database until it finds the data asked for, and its handiness in such situations can't be matched by filters.

Beyond these niggles, File has easy to use form and report creation, some advanced features such as the formula and calculate across fields option, and its support for ARexx – although not DBase IV – makes it one of the most useful elements of GDO2.



Keep track of those elusive pennies with the Calc spreadsheet

Serious sums

To be honest, spreadsheets are probably second only to assembly language programming packages in the boredom stakes.

Few inventions of man have invoked anything to match the overwhelming waves of indifference which emanate from the average user when a spreadsheet is mentioned.

However – he typed hopefully – let the budget-sensitive person or small business struggler use a spreadsheet for a month or so and the scrawly writing at the back of a spiral bound notepad will be banished forever.

Office Calc is based for its look and feel on the Professional Calc package, and though it shares few of the very powerful features to be found in its bigger brother, it is a meaty little performer in its own right.

Explanatory

There are over 100 calculation functions for use in spreadsheets, including Boolean and statistical functions (average, mean, and so on), and individual worksheets can be any size up to 32,000 cells by 32,000 rows. In addition, ARexx is supported and Office Write can be summoned to add explanatory notes to any cell in the sheet.

What this adds up to is a perfectly adequate program for any household requirement, from working out where all this month's money is going to go, to targeting areas in which money can be saved. Office Calc will also stretch to small business duties, though not as happily as the more expensive stand alone packages.

Data can be saved in graph format for use in the Office Graph utility, and Lotus 1-2-3 files can be imported or exported, so Calc is conversant enough with both the outside world and its own integrated Office partners.

In total, the program would stand up on its own as a low priced commercial program, never mind an element within a bundle, though this could also be said for certain shareware spreadsheets.

GASTEINER

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Amiga Shopper best buy



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Touch UP and Merge It Software — £119.95

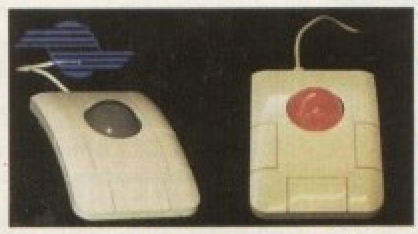
Full OCR Version Software Available £165.00

Touch UP , Merge It and Special OCR software.

Minmum system requirement 2Mb RAM, and a Hard Disk

£199.00

Trackballs



GOLD AWARD WINNER IN ST FORMAT 92%

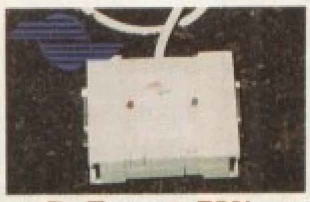
ST REVIEW 91%

Stylish three button trackballs, with third button supporting auto fire and drag and hold

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Auto Mouse/ Jostick Switch



St Format 78%

Automatic Switcher between two input devices with a click of a button. E.g. mouse/mouse, mouse/joystick, joystick/ joystick.

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Mega Mouse



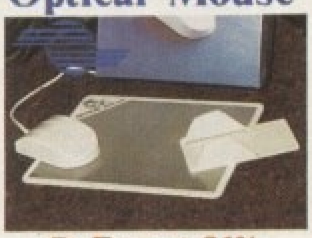
GOLD AWARD WINNER IN AMIGA FORMAT 90%

A 290 dpi high resolution Opto-Mechanical Mouse. Top quality construction ensures rapid and smooth movement, with micro switch buttons.

Mouse only £10.95

Mouse with hard mat and mouse holder £14.95

Optical Mouse



St Format 81%
Cu Amiga 79%

Superb 300dpi Optical Mouse with effortless micro switch buttons. Fast, smooth and reliable.

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A stylish Pen Mouse with quality construction and smooth fast movement. Micro switch buttons.Ideal for DTP,artwork,etc

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Cordless Infrared Mouse



Cu Amiga 81%

Remote control mouse, long working distance. Long life rechargeable battery. 260 dpi.

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GoldenImage Mouse with Mat

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The Brush Mouse with D-Paint. £ 19.95 — St Format 88%

GOLD AWARD WINNER IN AMIGA FORMAT 90%

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512k RAM with clock A500	£ 25.00
1Mb RAM for A500+	£ 39.00
Kickstart Switch	£ 14.95
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Power Supply for A500	£ 34.95
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1Mb Simms	£ 25.00
2-8 Mb RAM for A2000/A1500	£129.00
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Hard Drives

A500/A500+

52 Mb RAM Upgradeable	£329.00
105 Mb RAM Upgradeable	£399.00
210 Mb RAM Upgradeable	£519.00

A1500/A2000

52 Mb RAM Upgradeable	£299.00
105 Mb RAM Upgradeable	£379.00
210 Mb RAM Upgradeable	£499.00

ICD Products

AdRAM-2080(2 Mb RAM)	£139.00
AdRAM-540(4 Mb RAM)	£209.00
AdSCSI 2000 w/LPS105S	£405.00
AdSpeed	£129.00
AdSpeed/IDE-40	£229.00
Flicker Free Preference	£ 19.00
Flicker Free Video 2	£195.00
KickBack ROM Switcher	£ 19.00
Novia 60i	£359.00
Novia 85i	£449.00
Novia/AdSpeed 60i	£499.00
Novia/AdSpeed 85i	£599.00
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A 600....£274.99
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A 600 2Mb....£314.99
A 600 HD 2Mb....£469.99

A 600 RAM EXPANSION

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Phoenix PA 601-populated-1Mb....£44.99
Phoenix PA 601-unpopulated-0Mb....£24.99
Phoenix A 600 ROM Sharer....£29.99
Keyboard switchable!

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When purchasing any Amiga you can also buy our unbelievable value PHOENIX POWER PACK, which includes over £100 of quality software and accessories. Probably the best bundle around, just look at what you get!

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Man Utd Europe • Kick Off 2 • Captive
Rick Dangerous • Pro Tennis Tour 2
ACCESSORIES
Fully Microswitched Joystick
50 Capacity 3.5" Disk Box
8mm Mouse mat • 10 Phoenix Branded Disks with Labels

Phoenix Power Pack....£39.99

AMIGA 1500

2.04 Workbench Includes: Deluxe Paint 3, Platinum Works, Home Accounts, Toki, Puzznic, x Elf, Amiga Format Book and Joystick

AMIGA 1500.... ONLY £539.99

AMIGA 1500 + 1084 SDI

This *SPECIAL OFFER* combines both the A1500 (as shown above) and the legendary Commodore 1084 SDI Monitor.

AMIGA 1500+1084 SDI....£729.99
Limited Stocks Only!

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KCS Powerboard (with DOS 4.01)....£199.99
KCS Powerboard....£184.99
KCS adaptor for 1500/2000... ONLY £59.99

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PHILIPS 8833Mk II..... ONLY £194.99
Colour Stereo Monitor now including 'Lotus Turbo Challenge', and 1 years on-site warranty.

COMMODORE 1085 SDI....£216.99
COMMODORE 1084 SDI....£199.99

All monitors are supplied with a FREE cable for connection to your Amiga.

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14" Dust covers....£4.99
14" Tilt & Swivel stand....£13.99
Anti-Glare filter screen....£19.99
A4 Copy Holder....£12.99

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GVP IMPACT SERIES II Hard Drives, the fastest Hard Drive/Controller for the Amiga. Features Game Switch, external SCISI port, FAAASTROM SCISI Driver, GVP's custom VLSI chip and internal RAM expansion up to 8 meg! Units use high specification fast-access QUANTUM Hard Drives coming with 2 yr. guarantee.

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A500-HD8+ 120 Mb (Unpopulated)....£424.99
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PRICE CRASH!!!!

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Featuring Quantum/Connor drives-very fast access times-(19ms or better) • expand up to 8 Mb using 1 Mb Simms only • 1 year guarantee • slimline design ideally colour matched to the A500.

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EXTRA MEMORY-Only £25.99 when bought with drive!

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PHOENIX A500 Plus 2 Meg RAM Upgrade Modules



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LC24-100.... NEW! £189.99
24 PIN with compressed data mode, 16 K buffer and 10 letter quality fonts,(with Star printer driver only).
LC-20....£134.99
LC-200 Colour....£195.99
LC24-20....£199.99
LC24-200 Mono....£219.99
LC24-200 Colour....£268.99
XB24-200 Colour....£379.99
SJ48 Bubblejet....£229.99
Star printers come with one year warranty.

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Swift 240 Mono.... NEW! £259.99
Swift 200 Colour.... NEW! £219.99
Swift 9 Colour.... SPECIAL OFFER £179.99
224 mono....£214.99
224 Colour.... NOW ONLY £229.99
Swift 24e Colour.... NOW ONLY £269.99
Citizen printers come with 2 year warranty.

HEWLETT PACKARD-

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Deskjet-500 Colour....£559.99
HP printers come with 3 year warranty.
HP black ink cartridge....£24.99
HP colour ink cartridge....£29.99

AUTO SHEET FEEDERS-

STAR LC20....£57.99
STAR LC200....£59.99
STAR LC24-200....£62.99
STAR LC24-20....£62.99
STAR SJ48....£49.99

PHOENIX PRINTER PACK-

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We have a large range of high quality printer accessories for all the printers we sell including: dust covers from £2.99 • Ink cartridges from £13.99 • Mono ribbons from £3.50 • Colour ribbons from £7.99 • Printer stands from £7.99

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Fatter Agnus 8372A....£34.99
NEW Super Denise....£34.99
CIA 8520A....£9.99

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4 Mb x 9 (-70) Simm....£99.99
1 Mb x 4 (-80) Zip....*£34.99
1 Mb x 9 (-80) Simm....£27.99
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1 Mb x 1 DRAM....£3.49
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*This price is for 1 Mb of RAM

These chips cover practically every popular memory expansion or Hard Drive system on the market for the Amiga ie. GVP, SUPRA, MICROBOTICS, COMMODORE

RING OUR TECHNICAL HELPLINE IF YOU NEED ADVICE

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8 Mb pop to 1 Mb*....£99.99
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This famous drive has now been upgraded to include Anticlick and Virus Checker
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VIDI-AMIGA 12.... ONLY £89.99
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Embed live video in graphics!
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Superb sound and excellent dynamics. These two-way stereo speakers are an Amiga standard- **Excellent companions on any gaming soiree!**

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Heavy duty construction,rubber edging, perfect colour match, makes an ideal workstation for the A500/A600

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2 way....................£15.99
3 way....................£17.99
4 way....................£19.99

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Disk Box 25 Cap....................£2.99
Disk Box 50 Cap....................£4.99
Disk Box 100 Cap....................£6.99
Disk Box 120 Cap....................£7.99

"Thanks once again for your efficient service and patient advice."
S. Ward~ Norfolk

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When purchasing either a Phoenix Stereo Sampler or Pro Midi 2 Interface
Please Note: this is a limited offer only while stocks last!

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Combines ease of use with state of the art analogue to digital conversion technology.(inc. FREE sample editing software +audio lead)

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This fully featured professional quality midi interface is very flexible giving semi-patch bay facilities. It has five ports in, out, thru and two switchable out/thru. (inc. FREE midi lead)

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High quality sound sampler for all Amiga Computers
Amiga Music Made Easy-Only from Phoenix!

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Opus Directory....................£29.99
Xcopy....................£36.99
Quarter Back....................£45.99
Quarter Back Tools Vs 5....................£49.99

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Pixmate....................£43.99
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Vista....................£43.99
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ANIMATION
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Amos....................£36.99
Amos Compiler....................£21.99
Amos 3D....................£25.99
Easy Amos....................£22.99
Deluxe Paint 4....................£63.99
Director v2....................£71.99
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Map master for Imagine....................£59.99
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Surface Master for Imagine....................£29.99
Showmaker....................£142.99
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Art Department Pro v.1....................£143.99
Art Department Pro Conv. Kit....................£57.99
Can Do It V.I.G....................£94.99
Hyper Book....................£44.99

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Personal Finance.......... NEW! £29.99
Arena Accounts....................£83.99
Home Accounts 2....................£39.99
System 3....................£43.99
Cashbook Combo....................£57.99

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NAKSHA Upgrade Mouse....................£24.99
(With Operation Stealth, mat & holder)
Roctec Mouse....................£13.99

GOLDEN IMAGE
Mega Mouse....................£12.99
(Has just recieved 90% Amiga Format Gold Award)
Optical Mouse....................£29.99
High precision, pointing device.
Crystal Trackball....................£37.99
Infrared-Cordless-Mouse... NEW! £47.99
(Rechargeable top selling innovation.)
Optical Pen Mouse.......... NEW! £39.99
High Quality 8mm mouse Mats..........£3.99

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Powerful image processing tools for the office or the home enviroment.

POWER-Features include: 100-400 dpi • 64-Greyscales Thruport to printer • FREE Editing software.
Power Scanner v2.0..........£94.99
Power Scanner Colour..........£234.99

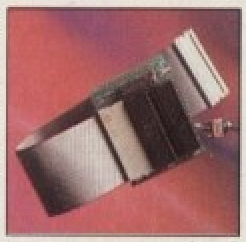
GOLDEN IMAGE-Hand Scanner Series
Features: 400 dpi • 256-Greyscale • Touch up and Merge it software.
AlfaScan....................£124.99
AlfaScan Plus....................£149.99
AlfaScan OCR *(inc OCR Software)*......£279.99

EPSON GT-6000 FLAT BED FULL COLOUR SCANNER- Plug into Amiga parallel port, 600 d.p.i. resoloution, up to 16 million colours
Phoenix Price....................£989.00

ASDG-SOFTWARE- Scanning software comes in two forms, integrated into art development as a new module or used as a stand-alone programme.
Phoenix Price....................£109.99

PHOENIX Kickstart ROM Sharer

Because some older games and business software will not run on the new Kickstart 2.04 ROM. PHOENIX have designed a sharer for both ROM chip sets. Switchable between 1.3 and 2.04 you can get all the benefits of the latest A500 Plus without the drawback of losing all your old software. Fits any Amiga 500/1500/2000.



***Kickstart ROM Sharer**....................£24.99
***Kickstart Rev 3/5 ROM Sharer**..........£27.99
***Keyboard Switchable ROM Sharer**...£34.99
Kickstart 1.3 ROM....................£29.99
Kickstart 2.04 ROM....................£34.99
*(ROM Chips not included)

AMIGA RELEASE 2

Now Only..
£79.99



The popular upgrade kit for 1.2 / 1.3 owners from Commodore is in stock and selling fast!

TRAIL BLAZERS-WHAT'S NEW IN OCTOBER 1992!

In this month's "TRAIL BLAZERS" section we spotlight some of the best newer products and peripherals currently available for the Amiga.

ROCTEC ROCLITE
This famous super slim drive has now been upgraded to include Anti-click and virus checker - THE SECOND DRIVE THAT IS SECOND TO NONE
Phoenix price.........£57.99

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Triple whammy

Stevie Kennedy spars with the A530, GVP's attempt to pack a three-way punch into one glove, and goes down in the first

Someone had to do it eventually, I suppose. We've had umpteen A500 accelerator boards with their own RAM expansions, hard drives with their own RAM expansions, and A2000-only combo cards with the lot, but we've never had an all-encompassing A500 product to match.

If you're an industry pundit, the news that GVP have released the first hard drive, accelerator, and RAM expansion package in a box for the A500 might seem a bit like hearing of Cadbury's latest chocolate bar. I mean, it's no big surprise that the A530 comes from GVP, is it?

In fact, some might be fooled by the established, respectable GVP badge and the unit's visual similarity to existing Impact Series II drives into thinking that the A530 is nothing new or is not worth getting excited about. Then again, fools are easily fooled. The A530 is a logical, sensible, realistic step forward in A500 peripherals development, but it is also one of the most exciting products to pop out of the oven in the past year.

With a combination of powerful features and a price point sent from heaven, the unit makes a very pressing case for the accolade of best punter product ever.

Installation, which is a matter of plugging in the drive's power pack and slotting the A530 into the A500/A500 Plus DMA slot, takes minutes, after which the humble low end user suddenly has a machine which literally blows away an A3000 and in some areas comes within an appreciable distance of 68040-based systems.

When first booted the hard drive, be it the 52Mb or 120Mb configuration, goes into its own Workbench installation procedure in which it simply asks a question about the version of Kickstart being used.

It then automatically installs either Workbench 1.3 or 2.05 ready for auto-booting without the user ever having to use the Fastprep software. This is plug in and go at its best.

Again, the deceptively simple nature of the software, the extreme ease-of-use, and the no-hassle setup might lure users into a false feeling that nothing much has happened other than the addition of a hard drive.

Left hook

This feeling lasts as long as it takes to open a drawer or run a program, at which time the A530's speed hits home like a Bruno left hook.

The 40MHz 68EC030 chip nestling at the heart of the A530 is about 30 per cent faster than the 25MHz chip found ➤



SIMM city



A minor drawback with memory expansion on the A530 is its paltry two SIMM slots. One of these is occupied by a 1Mb SIMM when the unit is delivered, but to expand beyond this is less than the straightforward exercise it at first appears.

Going to 2Mb is easy, as a simple slot-in job will install another 1Mb SIMM, but as the unit cannot configure to 5Mb, the purchase of a 4Mb SIMM will render the existing RAM obsolete.

A 4Mb SIMM from Silica costs £179, which is a reasonable price compared to the cost of a 4Mb external box, but if the user has to take out one or perhaps two 1Mb SIMMs and leave them in a cupboard to collect dust – they would sell second-hand for very little – this additional wastage has to be taken into consideration.

The upshot, of course, is that the 4Mb RAM configuration is the more attractive buy, but the extra memory boosts the A530 price point toward the £1,000 mark.

Eggs in one basket

The A530 contains just about everything the power user would want. It has a quick hard drive, a 40MHz 68EC030, and space for up to 8Mb RAM. With this little lot up and kicking, the average high-end application begins to look easy, but there is an Achilles' heel.

The Turbo button sitting prettily on the top casing performs the vital function of dropping the Amiga back down into 68000 mode. It is a vital function because a lot of software, arcade games in particular, refuse to work with the 68030.

However, when the Turbo switch is in the off position, the hard drive and extra memory are also disabled, as all three communicate through the same 32-bit bus from the same compact motherboard. This is an inevitable consequence of the A530 design rather than a design fault on the part of the GVP engineers.

The 16-bit 68000 cannot utilise 32-bit RAM, and as the A530's hard drive is driven through a 32-bit bus from the 68030, it too drops dead at a flick of the switch.

Unavoidable, yes, but something which any prospective buyer should bear in mind as the non-appearance of RAM and hard drive in 68000 mode coupled with the disappearance of the DMA port mean that the user can have either a hard drive-based 68030 system or a floppy-based low memory 68000 system, with nothing in-between.

➤

in the A3000, and many times faster than a standard Amiga.

Productivity packages, Workbench itself, and even some games such as flight sims and other 3D vector types, perform much smoother and faster than most owners of standard Amigas would credit.

Menus and requesters slide along like a greasy chip in a lard butty, wordprocessors and other mundane office packages motor away like Japanese workaholics, and high-end graphics applications suddenly become a possibility.

In short, the kittenish A500 into which one of these babies is slotted changes instantly into a large-striped carnivore.

It's not beyond the bounds of possibility that some people will feel the effects of culture shock after half an hour with the A530, as not only will they experience the joys of using a hard drive for the first time, they will also have to deal with the after effects of warp speed.

Nauseous

This can best be described as a giddy, near-nauseous, sensation brought about by sudden acceleration and prolonged activity at speeds to which the user is not accustomed, and is best remedied by a quick stab at the Turbo button, at which point the A530 is locked out and the Amiga reverts to its mewling domestic pet mode.

A turbo switch in the upper casing similar to the game switch on the Impact hard drives can be used to jump between 68030 and 68000 modes.

Re-booting is required every time the switch is used, but the facility is still handier than the usual software switches used by internally fitted accelerator cards.

Co-processor

In terms of expansion, the A530 is capable of growing in size in all directions. A 68882 maths co-processor can be fitted when the unit is purchased or can be added at a later date by the user who isn't scared of opening the casing and invalidating the warranty, RAM can be expanded to 8Mb, and an extra hard drive can be attached via the SCSI through-port at the rear.

The expansive or ambitious user should therefore have enough leeway to guarantee the A530's longevity as a useful peripheral.

There is no DMA through-port, but with the expansion on offer from within the existing casing, this is not a particularly important omission.

Take the A530's price, its instant power, and its ludicrously simple installation procedure, then combine this with the marketing principle of putting the first three steps to computing power in one box, and GVP must have a smash hit on their hands.

Whether it will become the best selling peripheral in its class remains to be seen, but it is certainly the best yet released. AC

Memory options

The RAM modules supplied with the A530 are SIMMs (surface in-line memory modules), comprising of eight memory chips on a tiny circuit board.

The SIMMs are fitted into slots in the A530 and are a much neater and easier method of upgrading RAM than the old fashioned method of bunging chip after chip into chip sockets. One SIMM containing 1Mb RAM is fitted as standard.

The RAM itself is of the 32-bit 60ns type, which means that each memory byte can handle numbers up to 32 bits wide, essential for use with the 32-bit 68EC030 chip. 60ns simply refers to the speed of the chips.

The typical A500 512k RAM expansion will be fitted with 120ns chips – far too slow for effective use of the faster chips. When slow RAM is used with a fast processor, the CPU will often have to wait for the contents of RAM to catch up with what it is doing, leading to "wait states".

Chips rated to at least 80ns are required for the ideal state in which the processor never needs to hang around, a condition known as "zero wait states".

As the A530 has 60ns chips, any memory intensive operation will be slightly faster than if the more widely used 80ns chips were fitted.

The use of 60ns – and sometimes 40ns on 68040s – SIMMs means that users are always best off using official GVP RAM upgrades rather than shop around for cheaper – and slower – alternatives. Mixing an 80ns 1Mb SIMM with the existing 60ns SIMM would undoubtedly cause problems.

Product information

The A530 is a product of GVP Inc
Supplier: Silica Systems
Phone: 081-309 1111
Price: £799 (120Mb HD, 1Mb RAM),
1Mb RAM expansion £59, 4Mb RAM expansion £179

How fast is it?

From a quick look at the A530's specifications, one would expect it to be faster than something unmentionable off a digging implement. Tests simply confirm this.

The 40MHz 68EC030 is significantly faster than a 25MHz A3000, which shows up time and again on benchmark tests, but without the optional 68882 FPU (floating point unit, or maths co-processor) it lags behind on many of the important floating point maths operations so vital to many advanced software applications.

Owners can add their own FPU, but a 40MHz 68882 from Silica Systems currently costs £229, a frightening amount for the budding ray tracer.

Many applications, of course, don't need an FPU, but those that do will run slower on the 40MHz A530 than they would on a 25MHz 68030/68882 combination. Tested with Diskperf2 and AIBB4, the A530 runs out as fast as the equivalent 40MHz A2000 combo but, surprisingly, slightly slower than the Impact Series II hard drive.

This is probably due to the Maxtor drive used in place of the Quantum ProDrive LPS. The former is a fast drive, but not quite up to the Quantum.

A530 transfer rate comes to about 950k per second, which is blisteringly quick but still slower than the 1050k per second of the Impact Series II. To put this in perspective, a fast A500 drive would rate 650k per second, so the A530 is still comfortably ahead of most of the opposition.

In processing terms, the unit is between five and over 300 times as fast as a standard A500 when the 68882 chip is fitted, though in practice the speed bonus works out at between three and ten times depending on the application.

Whatever benchmark is taken as standard, an A530-equipped machine will bounce all over its unexpanded neighbours from a great height.

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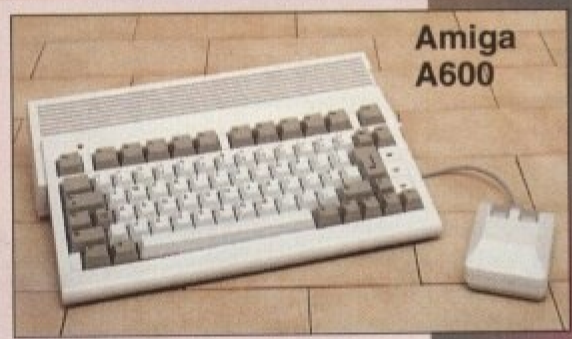
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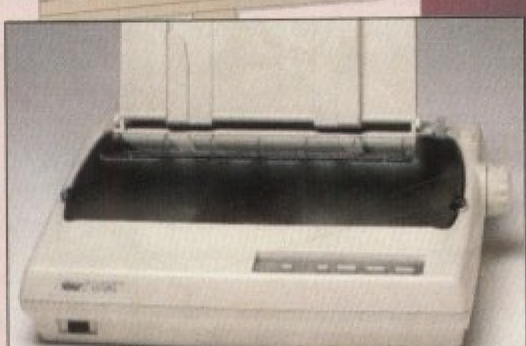
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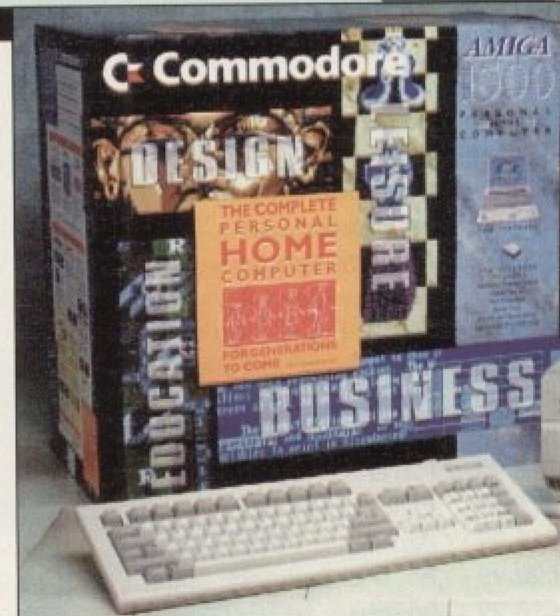
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P S D

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It's not often as a reviewer that I come across a piece of software I can wholeheartedly recommend. Fortunately Paint and Create from Europress Software is just such a product.

Aimed at infants and lower juniors, it should be in every classroom in the country. It combines great fun with educational validity.

Altogether there are five widely varying programs tied together with an exploration or discovery menu that's educational in its own right.

Five interlocking programs allow children to design their own monsters, set up and play along with their own band, make and solve their own jigsaws, assemble their own greetings cards and, finally, create their own artwork.

The menu consists of four screens showing both the garden and the inside of a house occupied by teddy bears. The child's task is to explore this by moving the mouse pointer to one of the many interesting objects and clicking.

When an object is clicked on, it shows its name – nice simple words for the young reader. More often than not the objects come alive with superb animations – swings swing, cats jump, the television screen shows a cartoon, a picture of a sunscape turns to a moonscape...

The list goes on and on; children are enthralled by it – and this is only the menu. Hidden away in the menu are the entrances to the other programs. The first I found – by clicking on a ted with a guitar – was Music Maestro.

Here you assemble your own group of musicians and even get them to play. The program has scores of preset riffs stored and you can step through them, musician by musician or the whole group at a time.

Any time you feel a group member isn't up to scratch you can alter his riff or simply dump him in the dustbin and try someone else. If you think you've created the next supergroup you can save it to disk.

You can even turn your Amiga keyboard into a piano-type keyboard and play along. It's an extraordinarily compulsive program.

Back to the menu and clicking on the ted who's busy painting took me to the Art Alive package. Again like all the packages, it's mouse controlled.

Art Alive

Here you draw on the blank screen by dragging with the left hand mouse button – you can select this with the Pencil icon. There are four widths of line available – via the right-hand button – and 15 possible colours to choose, which you can also use as backdrops by clicking on the Clear icon.

All the control icons are down the right side of the screen. As well as freehand drawing you can choose to rubber band straight lines, draw circles and rectangles and even pick ready made sprites to enliven your picture. There's also an Alphabet icon which lets you add your own messages to the screen – in five different fonts.

Returning to the Discovery menu via Escape I clicked on some greeting cards on a bookshelf and was taken to Card Creator. There are basically two types of card – portrait which are taller than wide, and landscape, wider than tall. Card Creator lets you make both.

For a start there's a freehand drawing facility, much as in Art Alive. It's also got the latter's Undo option which rids you of the last thing drawn. Clicking on the Pencil takes you to the print your own message icon, again in five fonts, while clicking once more takes you to the preset sprites.

These sprites include everything from Father Christmas to the Easter Bunny and a further click on the icon takes you to preset "Happy Birthday", "Hope you get well soon" messages.

In short, with very little effort you can easily produce professional results. Not only that, but you can save them to disk or print them out – with all the usual options – ready to fold into a personalised card.

Back to the menu. Clicking on the Ted playing with the jigsaw took me through to Jigsaw which is quite simply the best computer jigsaw program I've seen.

You can import your own jigsaws, say from Art Alive, and proceed to cut them up into from 12 to 112 pieces.

Pieces may be right way up, flipped over or totally scrambled. They appear on their own screen but you drag a group of them over to the jigsaw screen and position them with the left-hand mouse button using the right button to rotate them if necessary. Great fun – and you can even save your favourite.



Some gruesome results of Make a Monster

Frankenstein

The last program is Make a Monster – entered by clicking on the monster in the tree. Here you're presented with a grizzly set of icons of arms, legs, torsos, heads, eyes and so on.

You simply drag the pieces onto the screen to create your own monster, stepping through all the varieties of limbs and so on by clicking on the right-hand button.

Once you've got your monster you can save him to disk, animate him or play a simple game with him. All in all it's strangely compulsive and a must for budding Frankensteins.

To sum up, not only is Paint and Create highly enjoyable it's educationally valid, too. It meets virtually all the requirements of Keystage One Technology Attainment Target Five.

In simpler terms nearly all infant and lower junior computer technology requirements are covered.

In this short review I've hardly covered all the program's features, nor have I explored its full potential. Suffice it to say that it's highly enjoyable, simple to use and a great tool for learning.

If you're at all interested in education for the fives and over, buy it! It's an ambitious project, and a total success. AC

Formative fun

Mike Bibby enthuses over an educational package which is genuinely enthralling and fun to use



Our very own trio strut their funky stuff

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Blow away the cobwebs



Stevie Kennedy tests Blizzard, the latest low-end accelerator board

To many Amiga owners the accepted upgrade path, through 68020 to 68030 and the eventual lofty heights of the 68040, is about as attainable as a stroll down the yellow brick road.

Prohibitive costs and the likelihood that state of the art technology would be wasted on simple productivity tasks or a bit of game playing make the investment in a faster processor a waste of time.

On the other hand, the standard 68000 chip quickly begins to show its limitations when forced to cope with graphics-intensive wysiwyg wordprocessors and vector graphics-based flight sims.

How many thousands of users have cursed the slow screen update on some games, or prayed that just once their document would scroll smoothly?

Dodgy

Alternatives to the ageing 68000 are few and far between, restricted in the main to the ICD AdSpeed card, a couple of dodgy lookalikes, none of which have ever worked properly, and a few hardware projects circulated by the soldering iron brigade. Now there's Blizzard. Officially described as the Blizzard Turbo Memory Board, Blizzard is similar to ICD's AdSpeed in that it uses a double-clocked 68000 to up the Amiga's clock speed to 14MHz.

In addition to the simple clock doubling, however, Blizzard can also function as an 8Mb RAM expansion, and has an option for ROM shadowing.

What this means is that the A500 user on a budget can opt for an upgrade path which includes not only the acceleration benefits, but a possible 8Mb RAM expansion on top, making the 2Mb version at £284.95 a tempting buy. Taking an average external 8Mb expansion box populated to 2Mb at £120, the user is then paying £160 for the 14MHz clock speed and Kickstart shadowing capacity.

A factor which should be born in mind with products of this kind is that fitting the Blizzard board will invalidate the Amiga's warranty. The machine must be opened and the CPU levered out of its socket before Blizzard can take its place in the vacant 68000 slot, but the operation is not a complex one and requires nothing more than a bit of care with a screwdriver or two.

Auto-configure

Once in place, any memory on the board auto-configures, and all other system adjustments, such as whether the machine automatically boots up in 7MHz or 14MHz mode, are set using six DIP switches mounted on the board.

Software control is, of course, supplied via a disk supplied with the packaging, but other than a quick memory check, only the BConf program will be needed.

This enables the user to reset the machine to one or other of the clock speeds, and will also shadow any Kickstart file from disk. In this respect, the board acts additionally as a ROM sharer as long as the user has the relevant Kickstart file available.

Not as easy as it sounds, picking up a Kickstart file is possible on a bulletin board as many Amiga users have for years been kicking their machines into life with the popular ZKick utility.

For Workbench 2.04 users in particular, the option of downloading one of the easily obtainable 1.3 Kickstart files and using Blizzard as a ROM sharer gives the card an extra appeal.

Blizzard is a good attempt to crack what has previously been a very tight niche – the area in which spending a still sizeable sum of money on what is not a giant leap forward in speed is acceptable.

By offering the 8Mb RAM option and a Kickstart shadowing capability, Blizzard comes much closer than any other attempt so far, though whether or not it is worth the near-£300 asking price is still going to be a very carefully reached decision on the part of the user.

AC

Blizzard is a product of Advanced Systems and Software
Supplier: Micropace (UK)
Phone: 0753 551888
Price: £284.95 (2Mb RAM and 512k shadow RAM)
A500 only

Jargon Buster

Clock doubling

The problem with clock doubling is that the clock speed of a machine's CPU is by no means a simple speed indicator. Basically, a CPU running at twice normal speed should get through twice as many operations, but this in practice doesn't work out.

Memory limitations, the operation of the Amiga's custom chips, and the many processing functions not particularly reliant on clock speed together conspire to keep the real life effects of clock doubling down to rather less than twice normal speed.

A double speed chip will certainly work faster than a standard 68000, but in many cases the acceleration will be either slight, or virtually unnoticeable.

ROM shadowing

The Amiga's Kickstart ROM chip is responsible for many day-to-day features we take for granted, such as Intuition menus, windows, screens, and so on, and it works at a reasonable speed.

However, if Kickstart could be run not from a chip but from an area of faster memory, wouldn't it zip along nicely?

The answer is yes, and most accelerator boards offer a function whereby Kickstart can be "shadowed" into RAM, which is a great advantage when the RAM in question is of the very fast 32-bit variety.

Blizzard doesn't have 32-bit RAM, but it does have RAM which it accesses directly at the full 14MHz, and it is into a special 512k memory bank on the board itself that Kickstart is moved to when the shadow option is utilised.

This feature alone is responsible for an appreciable speed increase when using Workbench, any program which opens on a Workbench screen, or any other application which makes extensive use of Intuition.

Test results

Million of Instruction Per Second (mips):	A500	0.77,	Blizzard	1.65
DPaint fill HAM screen:	A500	25s,	Blizzard	14s
Wordworth scroll (10,000 wds):	A500	4m 3s,	Blizzard	2m 10s
AIBB4 benchmarks index:	A500	1.00,	Blizzard	2.02

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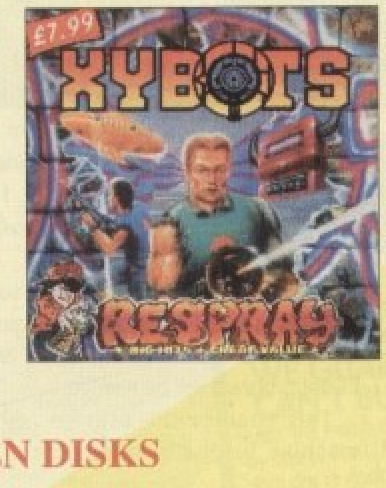
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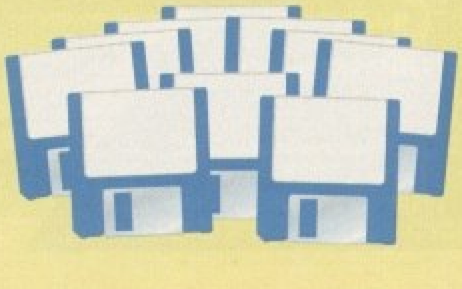
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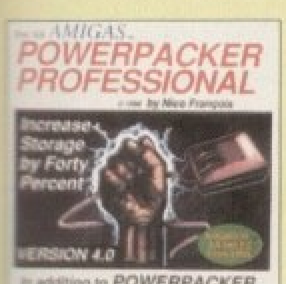
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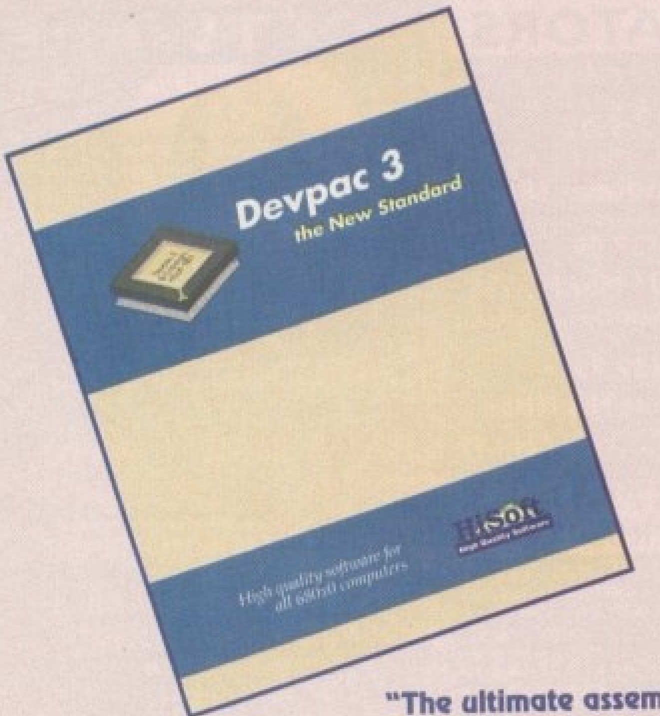
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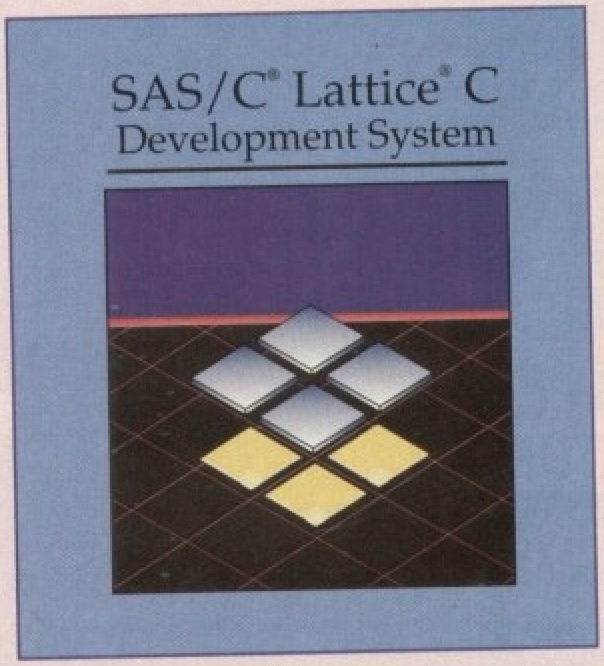
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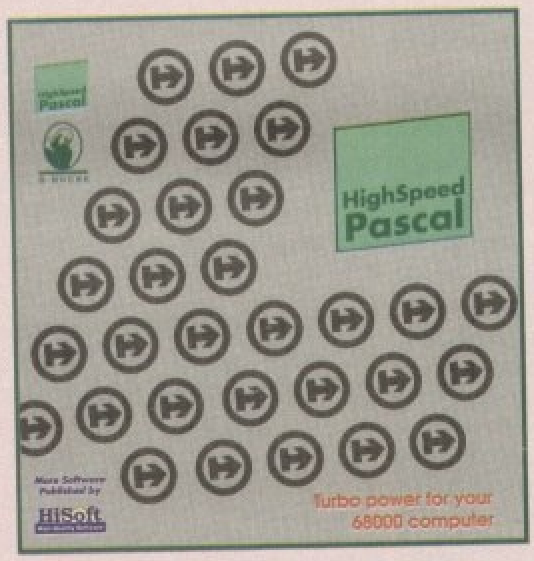
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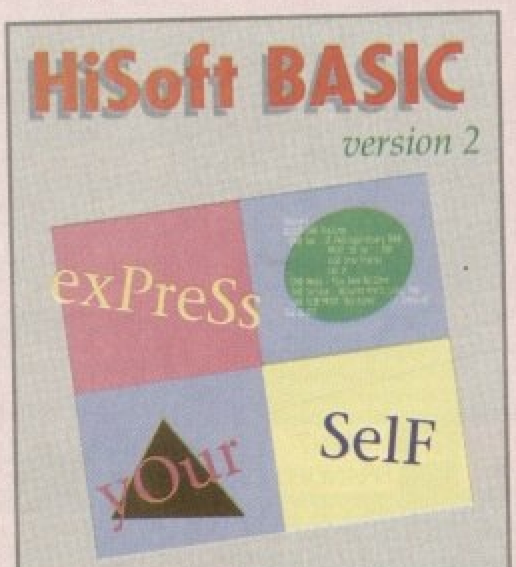
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At the moment we have the popular K-Spread 4 spreadsheet and K-Data database available (see our order form on the right).

We also have stock of all the 3rd Edition Amiga ROM Kernel manuals from Addison Wesley, together with the excellent 3rd Edition of The AmigaDOS Manual (Bantam Press).

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for more information on any of our products, please call HiSoft on 0525 718181, or fax us on 0525 713716 or write to us at: The Old School, Greenfield, Bedford MK45 5DE UK.

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HiSoft
The Old School, Greenfield, Bedford MK45 5DE

A new Amos for sophisticated program development in the 90s? You may ask what was wrong with the old 80s one? Nothing much really, but the problem was that everyone had an idea of how the program could be improved.

Amos from the beginning was Francois Lionet's own personal vision of what a programming language and editor should be, and although it was revolutionary at the time, there would obviously come a time when it had to be changed.

Tastes change, and although your environment in Amos Classic could be configured to suit you, a lot of things about the system were not quite right.

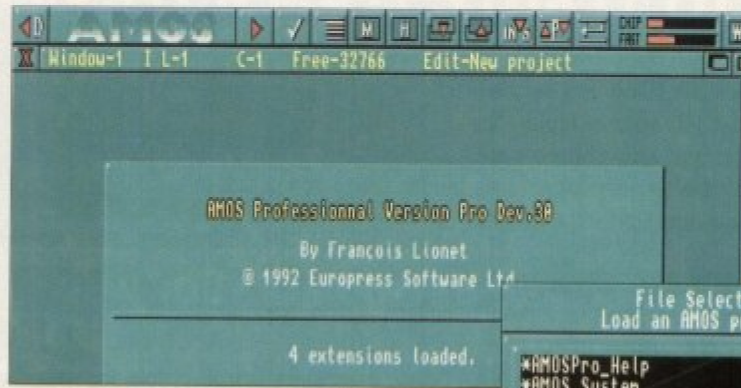
Fast forward to today, when Amos Professional is wheeled out blinking into the cold light of day. The big question is, what's it like?

Well, as predicted by myself and others, a lot of stuff has been borrowed from the Easy Amos system, like new requesters and the excellent Amos Tutor – now called the Monitor – which enables you to step through the programs you create and see the effects either as a small screen or a full screen preview. This is the most useful thing since the nose hair clipper, because it means you can stamp out the bugs as they arise. Most bugs in a program have to be figured out by sheer weight of logic – thinking your way through the program.

By and large, most of what you know ➤

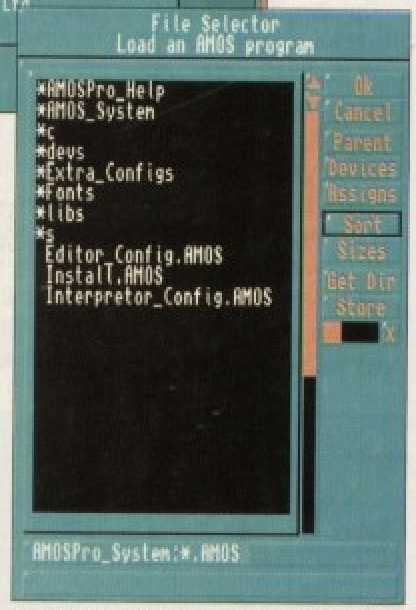


The range of Config options is fairly comprehensive



New icon bar options for the new loading screens





A vastly improved file requester for Amos Pro

The new Amos Professional interpreter takes Amos forward into the 90s. Phil South checks out this more muscular program development system

Amos turns Pro

IFF ANIM
New commands to play IFF ANIM files, which it is said operate faster than those used in DPaint itself!

Double precision support
For floating point ops and of course support for any maths co-processor you might have lying around cluttering up your motherboard

Unlimited banks
Before, you had just 16 memory banks to put all your graphics and sounds in, but now you can have up to 65,000. Of course there are also some new bank commands to cope with the strain.

Speech Mouth
Er, some people when asked what they wanted to see in the new Amos said they'd like a little animated mouth movement to match narrator-driven speech. What are they on?

New control structure
A new control structure has been added, ELSE IF, which is like switch casing in C. You can have as many cases as you like and finally you can hop out of the test with an ENDIF. Very slick, and C programmers will get off on that.

TRAP error trapping
The new TRAP command stops any particular errors stopping the program, meaning your compiled programs won't bomb out when they hit a snag.

Those new features in full

Features? Gosh, we've got them matey, and in piles. So make some tea, put on your Kevlar underpants, and take a seat while we run through those features in full...

ASSIGN
The assign command has been added, just like the AmigaDOS command.

Ports and Libs
About 40 to 50 commands have been added covering the devices like SER: PRT: PAR:, and also advanced commands for libraries like Lib Open, Lib Close.

MED support
For playing MED modules directly, plus of course Midi support through MED. The MED player is a library so can be updated without altering the main Amos Pro program.

Noisetracker support
Play Noisetracker modules directly. This is bolted into the system so future revisions of the NT program may differ.

ARexx control
A big selling point in the US, as ARexx was a major force over there even before it was incorporated into the Amiga system. ARexx ports can be opened and data sent and received as normal.

EXEC
You can now run any AmigaDOS program from within Amos using the new EXEC command.

POKE$ and PEEK$
Now you can use these commands to put strings into memory locations as well as numeric data.

Amos Interface
This is a major part of the revised Amos, allowing you previously impossible control over the interface of your Amos system and any other interfaces you might like to design for programs.

The system starts humbly by letting you customise the interface using IFF screens containing all the buttons and window graphics. The elements are grabbed using a similar process to a sprite grabber.

A resulting resource file is then saved off to be loaded by the program when the interface is in use! There is also the Amos Interface string-based language, which is like AMAL only bigger more complex. Not for the faint-hearted. This is Amos Professional after all! ➤

from using the Classic Amos program in all its incarnations will stand you in good stead. What Amos Professional represents is a more flexible and powerful environment for you to develop your software in, rather than a complete change of program.

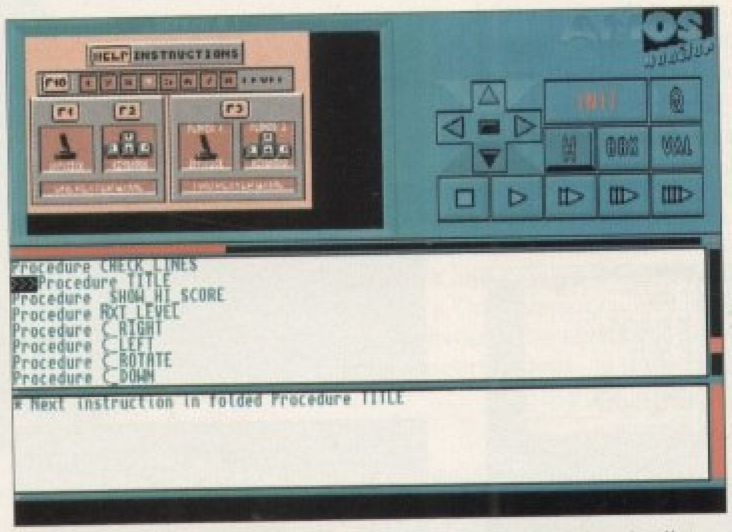
Opinions? Well for my money this is the bee's nose and the dog's anatomy. I can't think of a better answer to the question: "What can you add to Amos to make it better?"

The customising options alone will keep me busy for weeks, and sometime in the Spring I might get around to using some new commands.

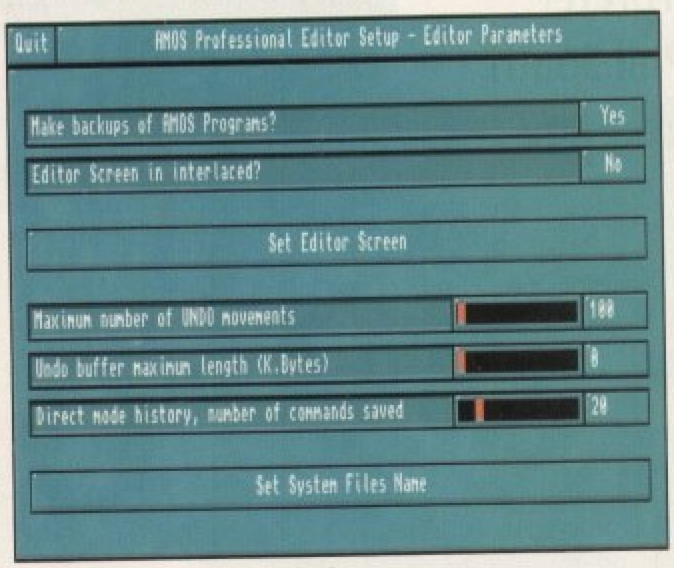
In the meantime, you and I can use Amos Pro to write Amos programs like the ones we wrote before, except this time we'll be using a spanky new editor. The one dark spot on the horizon is that at the time of writing there isn't a new compiler version to go with the new program. Obviously with all new commands and features, the compiler has to be rewritten to cope with the extra keywords.

According to Europress, this new version of the compiler won't be that long in the works, so cross everything crossable for luck.

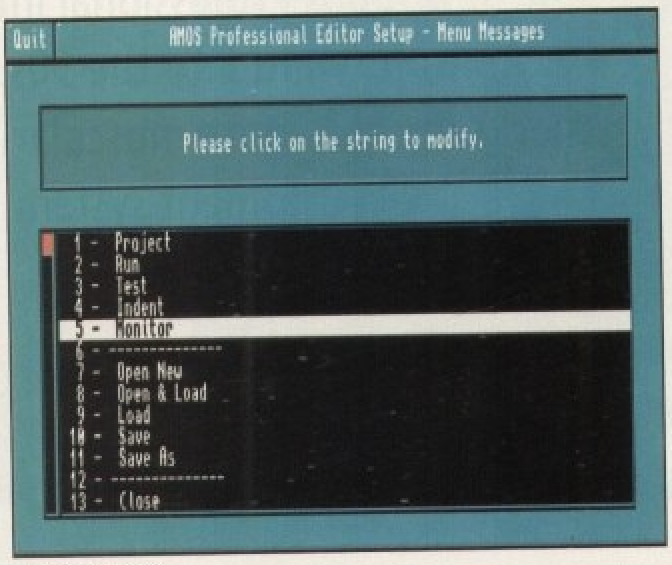
Should you buy Amos Pro? If I might use a motoring analogy, if someone offered you an Italian muscle car for the price of a Ford Fiasco, would you hesitate?



The new monitor can make life a lot easier



Even more setup and config options!



And a few more!

Six of the best

The program comes on six disks now, as many people complained about Amos that the examples were too few and not of very high quality. I thought they were pretty good myself, but I guess the customer is always right!

So now in Amos you have loads of examples and backup programs and the online help facility for the hard of thinking. In total there are around 200 more commands in Amos Pro than there was in the most recent version of Amos Classic.

Your old compiler won't work with the new program, but a new version called Amos Professional Compiler will be out very soon.

Amos Professional is available from:
Europress Software

Price: £69.99 Upgrades from Amos 1.3: £30 until 31st October and £35 thereafter

Tel: 0625 859333

Amos Monitor
The tutor program from Easy Amos revamped and now available for full Amos users. Bug tracing and stomping a speciality.

New editor
There is a new editor program in Amos Pro, with a much more workmanlike interface design, pull-down menus, and the ability to load, edit and run multiple programs.

Configuration
There's a new online config program, which enables you to alter your settings easily and quickly without having to load and run a separate program. There are also configure editor options like screen sizes, error messages etc, all of which can be changed.

Compatibility
You can load old Amos and Easy Amos programs, and run them quite happily. There's also a check facility to test compatibility with Amos Pro programs and the old versions of the interpreter, which automatically traces the areas where you are likely to have problems if you want the program to run on all versions.

Machine code
You can now load machine code into procedures. If the procedure is full then the code in the proc will be erased and replaced with the machine code block.

It's best to load machine code into a blank proc, and then that machine code program can be accessed using the proc name.

Keyboard macros
This system lets you assign any series of commands to single keystrokes making life a lot easier if there are some long repetitive processes you used to do by hand, like block out areas of the program using REM statements.

Not only that, but any menu option can be reconfigured to be triggered by any key you like.

Mark and Find
Marks remember where you've been and mark places in the program which you intend to visit often.

Undo/Redo system
You can Undo and Redo any number of lines, limited only by memory.

Cut/Paste
Now you can cut and paste at any position and not just whole lines. The left button is used to mark sections of code, rather than the right button in old versions, and this mode is activated by double clicking on the character you wish to start from.

Sound effects
You can now set up any one you want to be used by the system, rather than the old built-in sounds. This makes it more like the sort of thing you hear coming from an Apple Macintosh (spit).

Custom commands
You can replace menu commands with your own Amos programs.

Auto-save
For those of you who live in country areas, like me, and have power cuts every now and then because a cow bit through a power cable.

Kill Editor
A new command to remove the whole editor while a program is running, which then re-loads it after you've finished. There are options in config to stop this happening in programs you get from other people.

User menu
A place to store your own programs and run them. All accessories run from this menu.

On-line help
A sophisticated help system which means you have no real excuse for getting stuck once you run the program. Any word can be clicked on and help about the keyword is available on-line as you work.

Direct mode
This has been improved to have window gadgets for certain functions, and an AmigaDOS Shell-like history, using the cursor keys rather than the function keys. The result is a more powerful and user-friendly front end for the Amos programmer.

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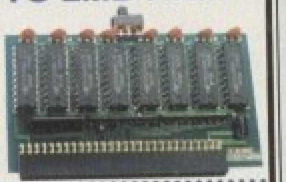
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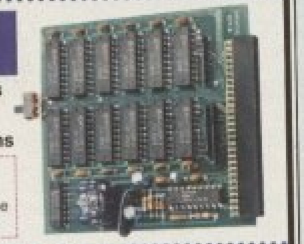
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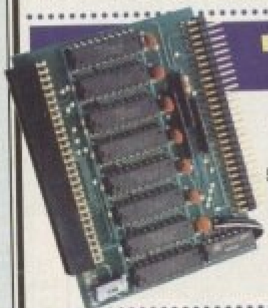
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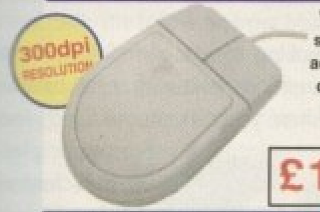


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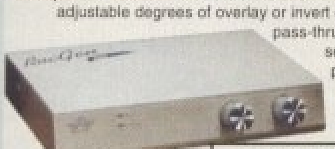
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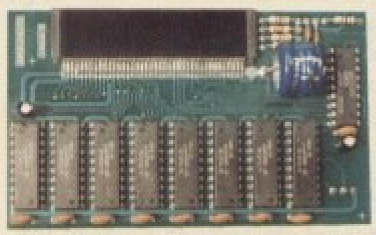
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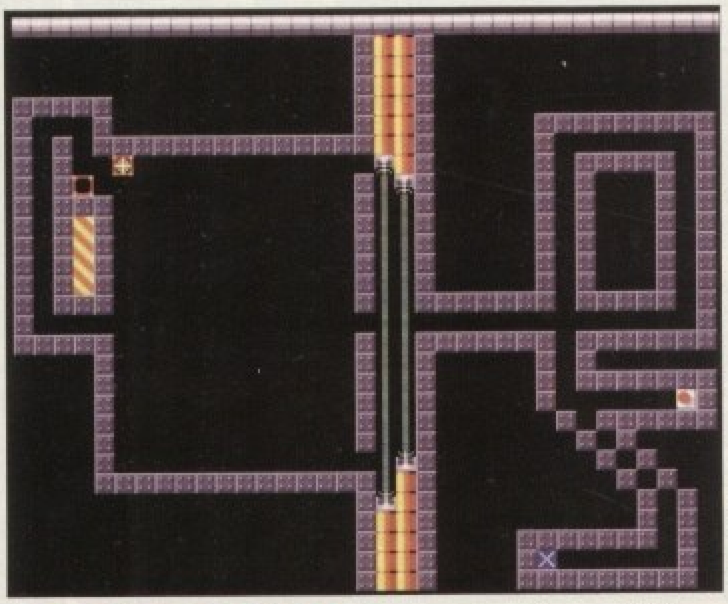
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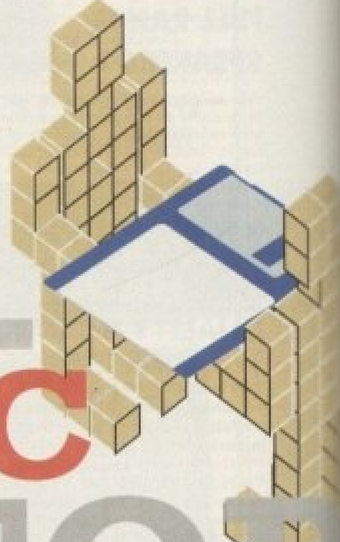
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Attempting to pass through a laser gate in Cyadonia

You'd have to be mad to buy full price packages when there's so much excellent PD, shareware and licenceware around. Phil Morse looks at this month's bumper bundle



PUBLIC SECTOR

Peg a Picture

Deja Vu, L99

by Steve Bennett

This educational program is aimed at primary school children, and indeed the author actually bothered to take it to a local school and get the kids to check it out, allowing him to make changes and improvements to the code before putting it on general release.

After a complicated instruction screen which an adult would be best reading and explaining to a child, you can use either pegs or shapes to create pictures.

You choice of shapes is large, and it feels a little like playing Tetris, except you can use the mouse to put the shapes wherever you want them to be! There are a wide range of colours to choose from, and you can make a colour flash by clicking underneath it – great for Belisha beacons. With full loading and saving options, this is an interesting and potentially useful education package.

Cyadonia

Deja Vu, L/67

by Jamie Newcombe

According to the instructions, you have to guide your CYAD (he's actually a yellow cross) around the many levels of the matrix – "a metallic structure of interconnected platforms and bridges hanging in the void of outer space".

This is typical PD, in that a simple idea has been taken and turned into a fully-featured game which is actually quite good fun. You move your joystick to move the CYAD, but once he has started moving he'll continue to do so until he hits something, at which point you can use the joystick to send him somewhere else.

Your task is to do various things before leaving the level through an exit – things like collecting gems, throwing switches and so on, and you must plan your route carefully to succeed. In its "thinking arcade game" feel, it's a little like Lemmings, and with a full tutorial section where you can choose which levels to practice or play, and a sufficient selection of interesting new levels and dastardly baddies, this will keep you occupied for a good while.

Dangerous Demos

Danger abounds this month! No boring vectors, no scrolling sleepiness, just the cream of the demo crop. First up is Olympic Cyclist Anim *(17 Bit, 2155)*. From the title screen of this 1Mb-only animation I learned that the UK have previously held the Olympics in 1908 and 1948. Roll on Manchester 2000, eh?

Anyway, I was expecting dodgy digitised videotape, à la mayhem on Wheels 3. Instead I was pleasantly surprised to see a fully convincing animation of the British bike which beat the world at the recent bash in Barcelona, as ridden by Chris Boardman, complete with stupid hat.

The animation is smooth, although as it only does one thing there ain't exactly hours of fun here. Still, well worth a peek.



It's that bike again!

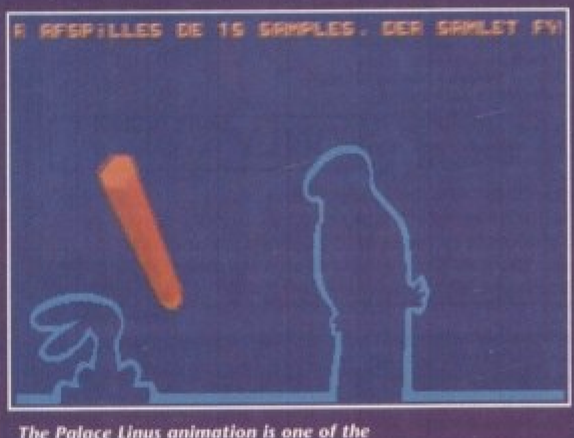
Underground all-nighters here we come! The Yamma Yamma Hardcore Megamix *(17 Bit, 2138)* is a simple but effective aural assault. A mad – ie mind bending – strobe accompanies a competent demo containing all the right noises and breakbeats, from Kicks like a Mule's The Bouncer to *that* grungy noise.

Demos like this are good fun, of course, but not a patch on a half-decent DJ. Still, it's better than most. It's certainly better than the Sesame's Treet Remix *(17 Bit, 2089)* which is a version of the recent love-it-or-hate-it "rave" smash from the Smart Es.

This opens with a loading shot of a badly drawn man smoking something dubious which disappears to reveal... a blank screen as the demo is playing.

It's an average version, the sound quality is acceptable, but it hardly breaks any boundaries, and with the record absolutely guaranteed to end up at 99p in the bargain bins, vinyl's yer' best bet for this one.

Alternatively, don't bother and buy some proper dance music instead...



The Palace Linus animation is one of the funniest I have seen in a long while

The Disknet Silly Names demo *(17 Bit, 2137 A/B)* contains 12 music demos, from Through the Limits to an absolutely appalling supermarket version of Eric Clapton's Wonderful Tonight, decimated in a way which only our European friends seem capable of achieving.

Some good samples and sounds lend the demo a very high quality feel, but it's let down by the scrolling credits, which apart from containing some dodgy English (no problems) also contains a lot of swearing (no need for it, lads).

Original animation shocker! Yup, the Palace Linus animation *(17 Bit, 2086)* is a clever Take Hart-ish effort involving amusing music and a pencil which draws things, Rolo advert style, for the central character to interact with.

This coding is neat, and the idea more original than any demos I've seen for a long while, all making this one of the better animations of recent times. Worth a look. And that's it for this month. Remember - stay dangerous!



…ing with the built-in keyboard in Concert

Concert Box

Deja Vu, L/90

This is actually the follow-on from Music Box, a program designed to teach musical basics as painlessly and interactively as possible.

I've not actually seen Music Box, but if the quality of Concert Box is anything to go by, it'll be well worth hunting down too.

This program allows you to write music, on staves, of up to eight pages of eight bars – 64 bars of music altogether. You choose your instrument for each of the Amiga's four sound channels – none of the sounds are any better than fair – and then you can compose music by selecting notes, rests and so on from a menu and dropping them onto the staves.

There is a keyboard, too, which you "play" by pressing the appropriate keys on the Amiga's keyboard. With all lengths of notes, stops and rests catered for, as well as full handling of key and time signatures and comprehensive save and load facilities, this is a well constructed and useful program.

It will not allow "proper" length pieces of music to be written, and they're not going to sound worthwhile – there's no Midi handling, for instance – but this is designed as an educational program, not a professional tool, and as such it works admirably.

It would be equally suited to school children or those who simply wish to learn more about music.

Sour Grapes

Deja Vu, L/74

by Chris Banks

The sour grapes from the planet Nokneed make what is unarguably the best wine in the universe. As Squasher Grape, it's your job to collect these grapes.

All of this eventually leads on to a 3D tile-flasher (ie you have to jump on every tile to change it in some way before moving onto the next level). Out to stop you are various baddies – or should that be natives not too happy at being exploited? – and scores of poisoned grapes, apple cores (nasty!), unpredictable big grapes (some make all the tiles flash for you), gems and other obstacles and features.

The graphics are rather good, but the whole thing moves painfully slowly, and it feels as if the link between joystick and game is not one which the code engenders much respect for.

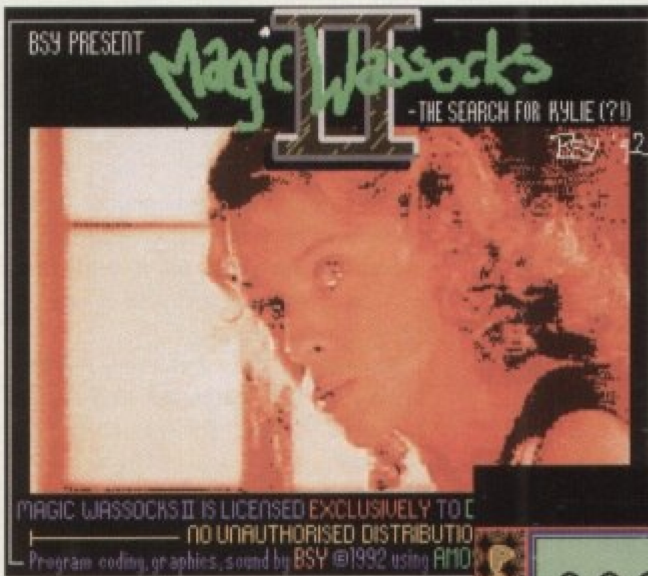
Learn to live with it, however, and the ardent fan of this type of game will find many levels and obstacles to conquer.

It's worth seeing just for the Ghostbuster-style monster which breaks up from underneath the tiles to harass you in a totally unconvincing buy equally unpredictable way when you run out of time!

Magic Wassocks II

Deja Vu, L/96

Fast and mad, this platformer, subtitled "The Search for Kylie", involves your moving around the screen, avoiding mushrooms which grow out of nowhere and disappear as fast, dynamite, arrows, oojits (spinning yin-yang symbols) and other obstacles.



Wazzock II, or the Search for Kylie!

It's nicely animated, with suitably frantic music, and simple but chunky cartoony graphics. The sound is quite impressive, with some nice vocal samples.

However, it's pretty difficult, with near pixel-perfect movement often required, and as your character – who incidentally looks like a cross between Quasimodo and a frog – doesn't exactly speed around the screen, you can find yourself getting very frustrated at dying because you can't escape from danger quickly enough.

Calling all PD libraries

Got anything worth reviewing? 'Course you 'ave, or you wouldn't be in business. So stop pussy-footing around like a picture of apathy and learn positivism!

Be a winner! Stuff your latest into a Jiffy bag, including a hard copy detailing what is on which disks, and send the lot the me, Phil Morse, at Amiga Computing, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP. You have only your chains to lose.

Picture Hangman

Deja Vu, L/83

Pet Shop Boys-ish music leads on to a rather novel interpretation of the old classic. At the top of the screen are the blanks indicating how many letters are in the word to be found out – the letters appear here when guessed correctly.



Doing some "crayoning" in Picture Hangman

Letters disappear once selected – avoiding the confusion of remembering which letters have already been used – and when you guess a letter correctly, a slice of a picture falls down into a blank space in the middle of the screen.

When the word has been guessed, the picture is completed, and will be seen to pictorially represent the word guessed.

All Guns Blazing

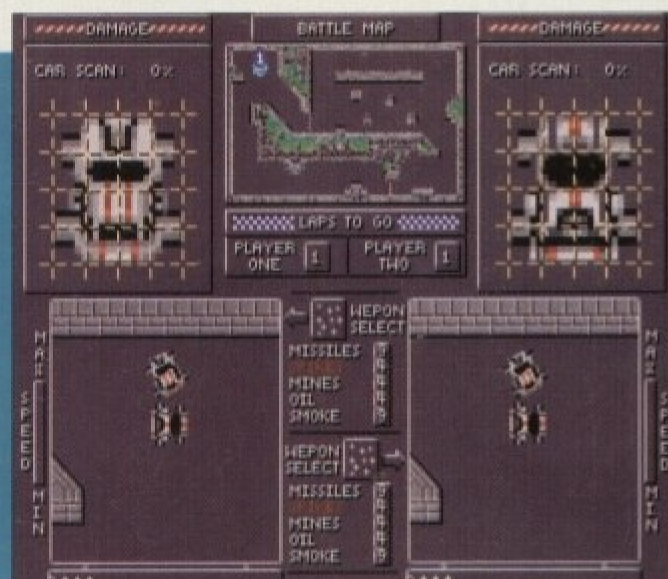
NBS, CLG011

This Supercars clone for two players uses the usual split-screen action and features several circuits as well as the expected host of dirty tricks with which to hinder your human opponent.

There are missiles, smoke screens, oil and so on, and there's also an overview map to let you see the whole course and how far you have got to go.

It's very well presented, with humorous FBI central computer-style resumes of the authors – including pictures – and also includes an editor allowing you to redesign the tracks.

Although the actual play areas are rather small, and it moves pretty slowly, it's the interaction with an opponent – or rather, the complete lack of interaction as you engage in some proper disruption – which gives the game its appeal.



Racing an opponent in All Guns Blazing

But this is not all – once a child has got this far, a paint palette appears at the bottom of the screen, and the picture may be coloured in as a reward for guessing the word correctly.

It's not really any more educational than the time-proven Biro-and-back-of-an-envelope version, but this might nevertheless persuade children who are more used to joysticks, lasers and power-ups to play game which will be beneficial to them and which they might otherwise never become acquainted with.

As for the lack of a man to hang – isn't such a concept a little out of date in the 90s?

Anti-Virus v6.04

by Paul Thompson

This compendium of virus checkers for Kickstart 2.xx users is more a much needed service than a set of utilities.

The damage which can be caused by viruses is not to be underestimated, especially if you have a hard drive. They can destroy months or years of collected data, corrupt irreplaceable disk and basically make life hell for anyone careless enough to have caught one.

I say careless enough, because with enough diligence and a good virus checker you can avoid or at least massively reduce your chances of catching one of these digital destroyers.

The problem has always been that it's a cat and mouse game between those who dedicate themselves to killing viruses and repairing the damage they've done, and those who write them. With new viruses appearing all the time, it is imperative that serious users keeps up to date with developments.

This compendium is for just such people. Officially updated every two weeks, it is, in reality, updated up to twice a week, with all the latest changes incorporated into the checkers it offers.

The charge for this service is a mere £15 for 12 updates, which is just enough to cover costs. It's a small price to pay for peace of mind.



That's a DC10, so we are informed

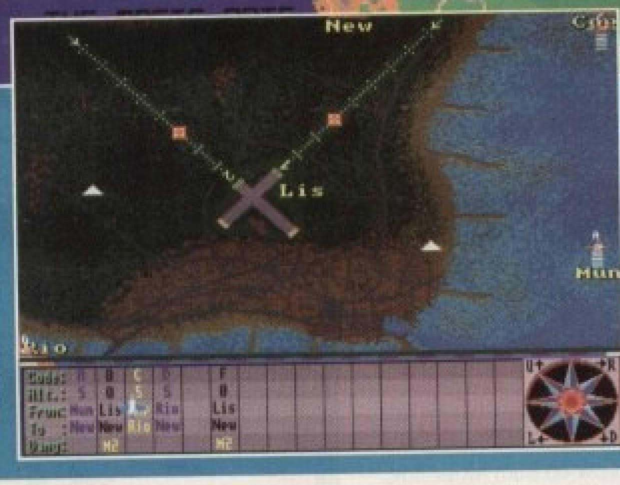
Airport

17 Bit, 2130

Here's an original idea – an air traffic control simulation. An involved and large program, you can choose your airport, from those deemed to be easy to the harder ones.

I started with Lisbon, one of the easy ones, and promptly made a complete mess of things. The program is wont to pop up with sarcastic comments, such as" Good job – but use the airways", when it's evident that you're doing anything but a good job, and the authenticity of the airports featured adds excitement to the simulation.

Although I was absolutely appalling at this, I've never fancied myself sitting in a control tower controlling thousands of lives. If you do, you'll love it.



Erm, I'm not really sure what's going on here

REM v1.0

NBS, U721

by Mark Forrester

Here's a simple but highly useful idea, which is really only of use to hard drive owners, unless you use the same floppy every time you boot up your machine – say, a wordprocessor.

REM – short for Reminder – tells the computer to remind you upon booting up of any important dates coming up. It'll remember birthdays, anniversaries and indeed whatever you tell it, and comes with comprehensive instructions concerning its installation and use.

It's a simple idea – aren't they invariably the best? – and is both well implemented and useful. A classic shareware utility if ever I saw one.

Andy's Amos Games 1

NBS, G294

by Andy Platts

As NBS point out, the best game of the several featured here is GlassBack, a platformer in the classic Manic Miner style. In the mining world, a glassback is, apparently, a lazy miner who spends his time lying around.

It looks quite nice, with some pleasing animation of obstacles, but your sprite is a little small and dim. It's certainly extremely playable, but there's nothing here that a Spectrum would struggle with.

However, taken alongside the other five games supplied, this package is fair value for money. It's worth a peek just to see how long you can survive playing Light Cycles at the hardest skill rate – I managed about two seconds!

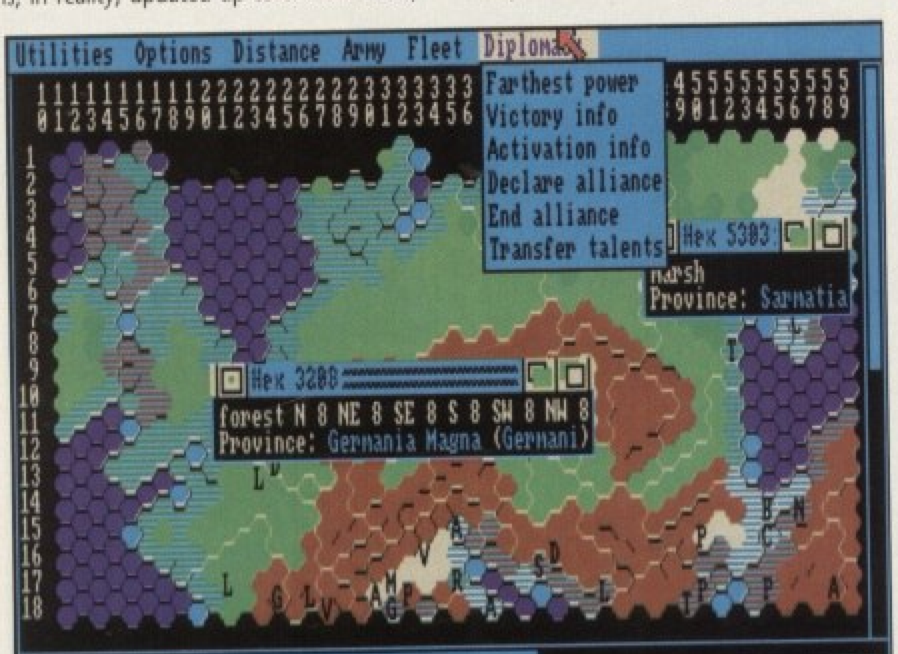
Eternal Rome

17 Bit, 2079

This is a highly involved die-rolling strategy game which I must admit went pretty much over my head. The various menus, which run across the top of a territorial map, allow the selection of such options as victory information, the declaration and severing of alliances, and full control over your armies and fleets.

Should you like this kind of strategy game – and it certainly seems to be well implemented – and have a soft spot for the Roman Empire circa 30BC, this will be right up your street.

Should this all go right over you head there's a version of dominoes on the disk too!



Your chance to surpass the Roman emperors in Eternal Rome

Future Shock

Virus Free PD, CLG10

Written in Amos, as indeed are a lot if not the majority of this month's PD offerings, this is a space age move-around-a-grid style thing, with the usual password access to the various levels, pretty good graphics and nice music.

It's very hard, however, due mainly to the speed at which it runs, and the fact that you can die just by touching a wall. Still, worth a look if you like the sound of it.

Blitz

Paul Watson

This is a PD version of the old arcade classic Bomber. Written in Amos and compiled, it's a simple but fairly playable little number.

As usual you get to choose your weapons, and this version is smooth, colourful and reasonably fast. A simple and old idea – but aren't they sometimes the best?

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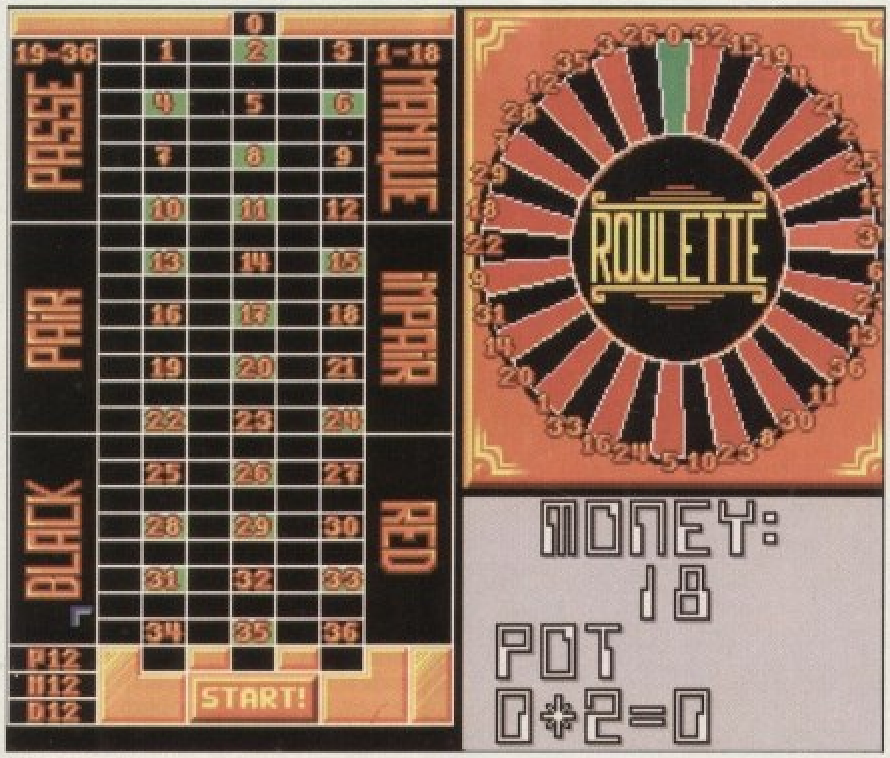
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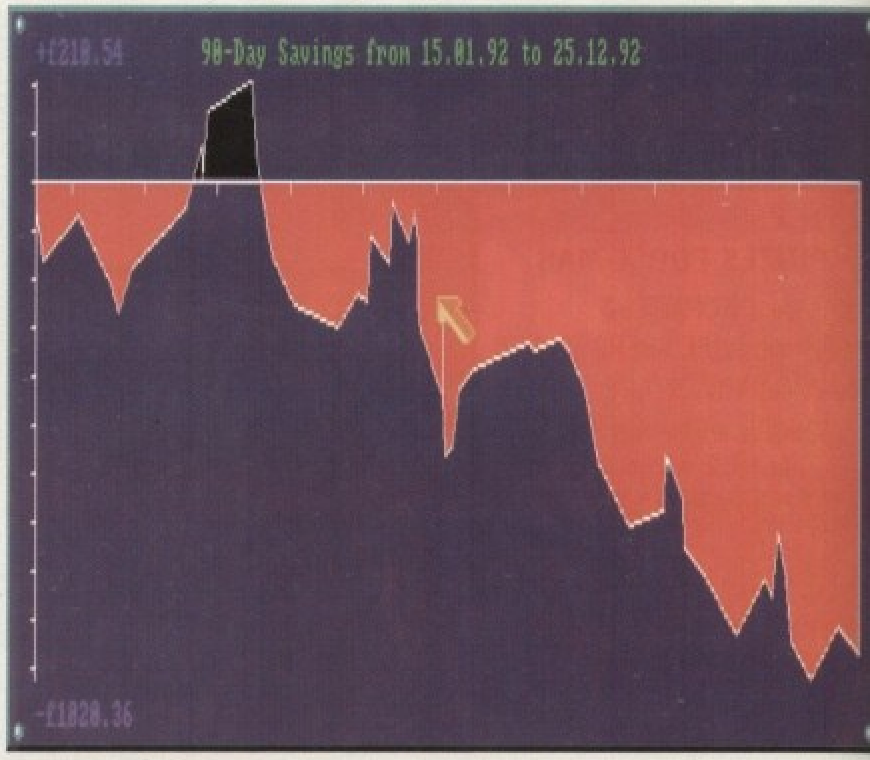
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The big wheel keeps on turning...



Viewing an account graph in The Money Program

Roulette

17 Bit, 2139

A version of the arcade favourite containing all the usuals – red and black numbers, automatic calculation of money and winnings – and a passable, although not particularly impressive, wheel.

It could have been done a lot better – it certainly could have looked nicer – but hey! this is the public domain. Somebody might have been looking for a version of roulette for years, and here it is.

Frac v2.0

Amiganuts United

Not another disk full of our random pals fractals, surely? Well, no. Frac stands for the Fantasy Role-playing Adventure Creator which allows you to put all those vivid, perverse, humorous (or maybe just interesting) ideas into your Amiga and turn them into fully-fledged adventures. Yowsers!

You define locations, words, objects and characters, and can change standards such as unknown word trapping and music. Although I've not had a chance to write an adventure yet, it certainly looks and feels fully-featured, professional and reliable.

Zalycon

17 Bit, 2158A/B

Only one person left who can help us... blah blah... loads of suspiciously stupid aliens... blah blah... it's that kind of game.

After an inordinate amount of disk swapping, the purpose of which I fail to understand, you finally reach the first screen, which is an asteroid-dodging affair.

You can crash through loads of asteroids before you finally die. When you do? "Please insert disk..." prompts you to reach for the off button. Not very good at all, I'm afraid.

The Money Program

17 Bit, 2126

by Alan Bilsborough

This home accounts package can handle up to 12 accounts simultaneously – plenty for the home, one would imagine – and runs from a main menu which allows the viewing and entering of accounts as well as access to other menus, which cover for instance, the inputting of data (including date, amount, and optional cheque numbers and comments).

A budget comparison feature allows to user to see how much of a set budget has been used to date.

It's a tidy and businesslike program, presented in functional grey, and runs smoothly and efficiently. The point is, though, that I've never met anybody who gets any further than the back of their latest gas bill when working out how much money they've got left.

However, this may be more of a reflection upon me and my acquaintances than society at large. If you're prepared to put in the time and effort required to keep your accounts updated on a regular basis, look no further than The Money Program.

Address Print v2.1

17 Bit, 2154

by Paul Lathwell

This is a simple program allowing you to save, load and modify addresses and then print them onto labels. You can select from five fonts and three font types, and the whole thing is presented in a simple and easy to use manner.

Although the author is not sure if it will work with any printed bar the Star LC200 colour model, it should work on Epson-compatibles, and you're not going to lose much in finding out, are you?

If your wordprocessor cannot handle this kind of thing, it may be worth getting yourself a copy of this disk.

Mayhem on Wheels 3

17 Bit, 2116

Containing two car smash animations, running in jerky black and white at approximately eight frames a second and filling only about and eighth of the screen, this ain't exactly TV quality.

Still, the actual crashes are worth seeing in a morbid kinda way, and you can pause and frame advance too, just to savour the mechanical gore a little more fully.

Top Secret

17 Bit, 2156

Nice chunky graphics including brill squirrels which do all those cute little squirrely things with their paws and mouths (er, ▶



The title screen from Top Secret

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you mean eating nuts? – Ed) add pzazz! to what is actually a pretty ordinary looking platformer.

You must collect what look like reel-to-reel tape players while avoiding the nasties. Competent and absorbing for a few hours, I would imagine.

Klaktris

17 Bit, 2174

by Tony Hosier

This is like Tetris insomuch as the game area comprises a grid into which pieces fall to be positioned by the player, and that you die when the pile of pieces reaches the top of the game area.

However, where Tetris works using shapes, Klaktris uses colours. All the pieces are the same shape – three by one blocks – but each block contains three colours, which can be switched by pressing the Fire button.

The idea is to make rows of three or more cubes of the same colour, which can run horizontally, vertically or diagonally. When a row is formed, the blocks which make it up disappear, allowing those above to fall down.

The graphics are simple but very attractive, and the way the blocks crack up and disintegrate is a piece of coding worthy of the crumbling of the pillars of Atlantis, or something.

However, as with most Tetris variants, at the end of the day it does not beat the original for sheer, hair-tearing addictiveness. But it's worthwhile variant nonetheless.

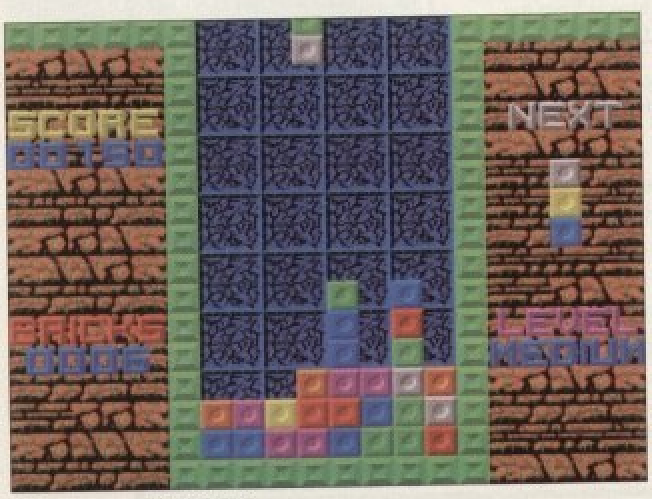
Satanic Rites issue 2

17 Bit, 2167

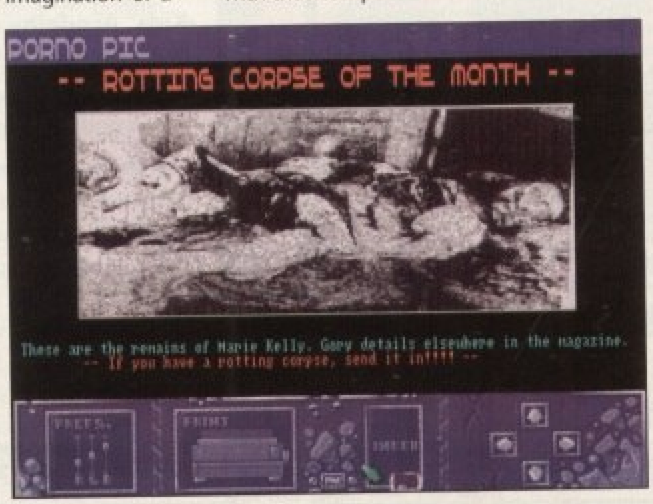
This, it must be admitted, is an extremely well presented disk magazine. As the title suggests, it pertains to the demonic side of our collective existence, featuring such articles as Top 20 Murderers (average killings per murderer: 5.5), How to Commit Suicide ("however desperate you are, don't use mains electricity – it hurts!") and Corpse of the Month ("if you have a favourite corpse, send it in!").

Thankfully it's not really that Satanic at all, the sinister overtones being about as developed as those in the seminal horror flick Bad Taste, where the general feeling is more the overworked imagination of a typical 15-year-old than anything seriously evil being responsible for most of the dark stories contained within.

A section detailing classic cock-ups in a certain rival magazine to the hallowed *AC* raised a laugh in this office, but Satanic? Naaah. Come on children, stop playing with that computer. It's tea-time!



Colour capers with Klaktris



Bad taste? Satanis Rites issue 2

Words not wonga!

Wordprocessing need not cost a gold-plated Parker. Here are two biros of the on-screen writing world

Powertext v1.02

Deja Vu, L/98

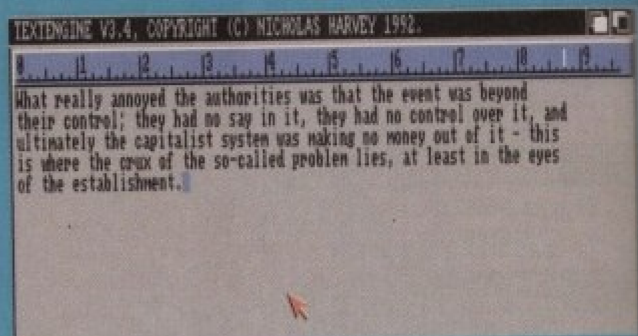
by Gary Stimpson

PD wordprocessors seem to be getting more and more like their professional counterparts all the time, with complex features becoming the norm and ease of use improving dramatically with every new update.

Powertext has a rather impressive features list, including full custom format/Ascii loading and saving and a fully-featured spell checker.

It's got a proper find and replace function, the ability to switch between Insert and Overwrite modes (useful for someone used to using one or the other elsewhere) and a wide preferences setup, including auto-save, the ability to edit, load and save function keys, and adjustable tab settings.

It's not perfect. There are some features missing which I would have like to have seen, not least the ability to select blocks by highlighting them with the mouse, rather than having to use menus and the keyboard, but for £4 it is an absolute bargain. Indeed, those who write the odd letter need look no further than this for the answer to their wordprocessing needs.



Text Engine: Another blockbuster wordprocessing bargain

Text Engine v3.4

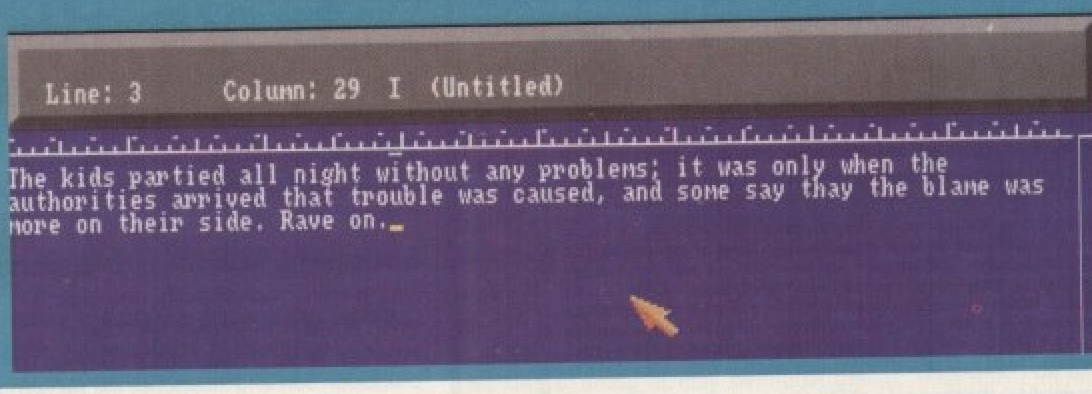
17 Bit, 2129

by Nicholas Harvey

Spoilt for choice! Another mega PD wordprocessor which comes complete with the AZSpell spell checker, a wealth of text styles (as opposed to fonts) and even macro support!

It looks clean and workmanlike, with menus at the top of the screen controlling most functions, and seems to operate fast enough for most users.

Still no easy marking of text blocks for cutting and pasting, but again, what do you expect? It's a complete bargain.



Powertext – competent and cheap

Where to get 'em

Amiganuts, 169 Dale Valley Road, Southampton SO1 6QX

Deja Vu, 7 Hollinbrook, Beech Hill, Wigan WN6 7SG

17 Bit, First Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield WF1 1DH

NBS, 1 Chain Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5QA

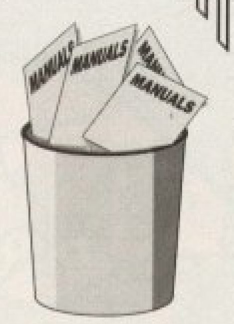
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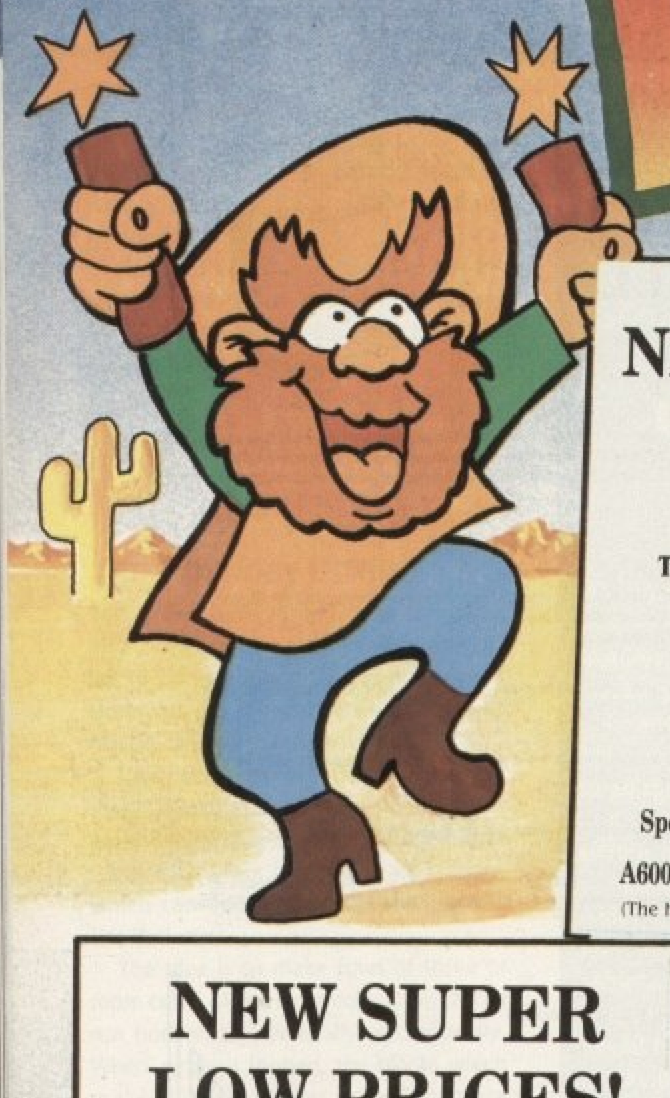
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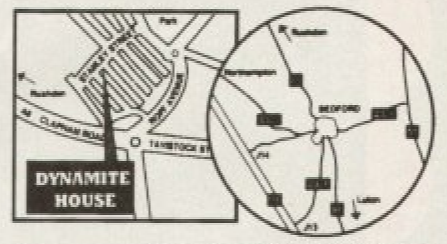
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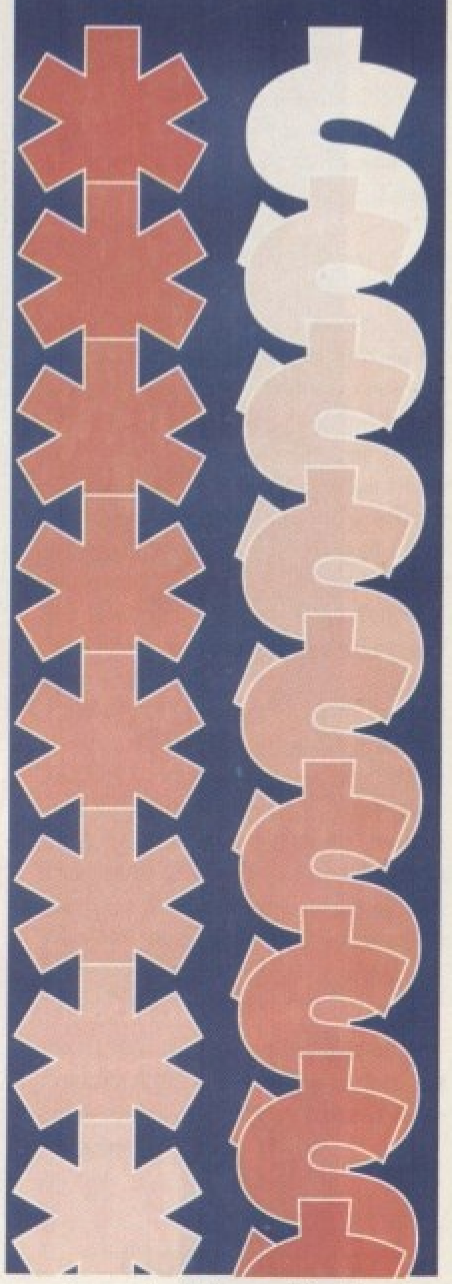
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ABSOLUTE beginners

PART 8

As we become more competent, Stevie Kennedy looks at ways to automate AmigaDOS scripts



Basic AmigaDOS scripts, such as the startup-sequence, are no more than simple batch files which execute a list of commands one after the other, but there are many more flexible uses for the Amiga's command language and, with a little effort, scripts can be made to carry out fairly complex tasks.

Take a look, for example, at the install routines used by many commercial software houses. The chances are that AmigaDOS is being used to check the state of a hard drive, look for various configurations, and report back to the user with questions on how to proceed with the installation.

Such scripts may appear daunting at first, but AmigaDOS's inherent simplicity means they're really not much more complicated than the scripts we've written over the past six months or so.

Let's look at the most basic technique used in these circumstances. The IF ... ENDIF pairing will be familiar to anyone who's ever program in Basic, and the commands work in more or less the same way in AmigaDOS. As in Basic, a general IF ... ENDIF statement looks like:

```
IF (condition}
(Carry out these instructions if condition
satisfied)
ELSE
(Carry out these instructions if condition
failed)
ENDIF
```

The major limitation with the IF command is that there are only a few conditions which can be tested for (see box). Variables can be tested using EQ, GT, and so on, and the WARN test can monitor the user's response to the ASK command, but that's it.

Before despairing, however, now would be a good time to look closer at the GETENV command, which when used with the IF...ENDIF pair can lend AmigaDOS scripts a whole new lease of life.

Using a combination of these two and the odd ASK command, the script writer can produce active dialogues between the user and the script, ideal for almost any purpose you care to name.

Most of what follows will, I'm afraid, be of use only to Workbench 1.3 and 2.04 users, as the environment variables in Workbench 1.2 are much more restricted and do not allow the sort of operations we'll be attempting. Sorry, but that's progress for you.

A straightforward example of what can be done with environment variables would look like:

```
.key var1
echo "Hello, matey! Insult me if you dare!"
getenv >env:insult *
ask "Are you calling me a $insult ?"
if warn
echo "In that case, same to you with knobs
on!"
else
echo "Hmm! Just as well!"
endif
```

The script begins with the usual .key line which tells the Amiga to expect user input during the script's execution, then in the next two lines uses a special feature of the GETENV command to ask a question and accept any input the user likes. This is accomplished through the use of redirection and the "*" option.

Redirection, as we know from earlier in the series, is the technique whereby, using pointed brackets, the Amiga is told to send output from a command to a file or device other than the default.

In the case of the GETENV command, the default destination for output is the current Shell window, but we've told the command to send it to the file ENV:INSULT instead.

If you examine the last character in the GETENV line, you'll notice that it is an asterisk, and not a particularly self-explanatory one at that.

This character merely tells the GETENV command to take its input from the console device (the current Shell window, in other words), which explains why when the script runs it waits after the question called by the ECHO statement until the user types something in and presses the Return key.

At this point, the word just entered is passed to the environmental variable "insult", then printed to the screen by the ECHO command which follows straight after. However, ECHO only knows to print the variable because we use the $ sign.

When Workbench 2.0x sees a $ sign, it knows that what follows is the name of an environment variable, and acts accordingly. In the case of our ECHO command, the contents of the variable are printed to the screen rather than the literal contents of the echo string, so we get:

```
ARE YOU CALLING ME A TOERAG?
```

rather than:

```
ARE YOU CALLING ME A $INSULT?
```

Note the use of ASK, IF, ELSE, and ENDIF to round off our script. The ASK command prints a question which incorporates the $insult variable in the same way as the ECHO command, then passes the Y or N answer to the IF command.

When the user answers Y(es) to an ASK command, the WARN flag is set to positive, which means the IF WARN statement will execute the instructions before the ELSE command.

When the user answers N(o), WARN is not set, which means the second instruction or set of instructions between ELSE and ENDIF is executed.

By applying a little lateral thinking, most users should be capable of producing almost unlimited variations on this theme using exactly the same techniques as our frivolous example script.

Even the most complex scripts use these commands, some in more ingenious ways, some by simply working through a great number of them, but it should be clear by now that without the IF...ENDIF construction and the use of environment variables, AmigaDOS scripts would be much less flexible.

Next month, we'll look at more ways in which the AmigaDOS script can be beefed up. The above examples form the core of what can be done with AmigaDOS, especially in situations where the user is asked to make some sort of input, but there's plenty more to come.

AC

This month's commands

IF...ELSE...ENDIF

The IF command can use the following options:

NOT, WARN, EXISTS, EQ, GT, GE, VAL, ERROR, FAIL

NOT can be combined with any of the other options.

WARN is returned positive if the user has answered Y(es) to an ASK question, and negative if N(o).

EXISTS is used to check for the existence of files or drawers.

EQ, GT, and GE (equals, greater-than, greater-than-or-equal-to) are used to compare two alphanumeric strings.

VAL is used to test the numeric value of a variable, such as a counter.

ERROR and FAIL are used to check for error return codes and test the severity of the last error.

They will not work unless FAILAT has been used to raise the fail level above 10 and 20 respectively.

Why ENV?

ENV: is the directory used to store all environment variables, and is usually set up by the Workbench startup-sequence as a directory in the RAM disk. When we redirect output to a file in ENV:, that file – if it doesn't already exist – is created, and as it is now in ENV: it is automatically treated as an environment variable.

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Upgrade options

As the owner of a basic A500, the news of the demise of the A500 is worrying me. I have been considering upgrading my machine for some time, and below are my options. Could you tell me which you think would be best and advise if there are any compatibility problems?

- Buy a hard drive (GVP is a favourite, but could you recommend one which does not fit in the DMA slot?) then expand memory to 4Mb either through the hard drive expansion or a Virgo card.

  Next, go for an IBM emulator (I await details of the Emplant IBM version). Is there a way to attach Zorro slots to the A500?

- Try to trade up to an A1500 or above and uprate specs to match those above.

- Turn to the PC market and give up on Commodore altogether.

Which is the best and/or cheapest?

A P Horrocks, Burnley

Possibly the most expensive would be the last option. Despite the price cuts in the PC market, the viable entry level machine (386DX or 486SX with hard drive) would still set you back £1,000 or more.

In addition, you would soon find out just how expensive the best PC software can be (does £400 for a wordprocessor sound cheap?).

The trade up option is an appealing one, especially if you sell your A500 and go for a machine through the Classifieds section, but to trade up to a new Amiga just as a range of machines is about to be launched would be a bit like buying a new car at the end of July.

For trade ups, wait until the A2200 is released and see what you think of it.

Expanding the A500 is still a very sound upgrade path, despite the fact that with the machine's so-called "demise" you would be hard pressed to recoup your investment in a year or two.

GVP hard drives are the undisputed kings of the A500 castle, and the HD8+ would also offer an 8Mb RAM upgrade path.

You could take a look at the Ashcom and Rossmoller drives reviewed in our Amiga Market section (recently renamed to avoid confusion with another Amiga title), as both offer very cheap storage.

In this situation, you would be balancing the technical excellence of the GVP product with the relatively untested mettle of what is undoubtedly a much more affordable product, but that's what consumer decisions are all about.

As for IBM emulation, the Vortex 386SX Golden Gate (reviewed last month) is easily the best PC emulator available at the moment, but it will only be an option if you decide to upgrade to the A1500. The Bodega Bay add-on provides the A500 with four Zorro slots, but costs £400 and is therefore a false economy.

Bengali fonts

I own an A500 Plus and I would like to wordprocess in a different language, namely Bengali. I know this is possible because I have seen it done on a PC286.

I created Bengali fonts using the bitmap font editor, FED, which comes on the Extras disk, and the font set was then transferred to the fonts drawer on my Office Page disk, but I am not satisfied with the results.

Can I buy a wordprocessor or DTP package to write documents in Bengali? Are these fonts available as outline or CompuGraphic fonts from anywhere?

A Hamid, London

I've never seen a Bengali font on PD disk or bulletin board, but there must be one somewhere. If a member of an Amiga user group or someone with a sufficiently multilingual fonts collection would care to send the font to ACAS on a disk, I'd be happy to send it on.

One possible course of action would be to convert your bitmap font to a scalable font using something like Font Manager from BCS in Germany. There are a few such font converters slouching about, but you may have to look very hard to find one.

Your best bet would be to contact people like EM Computergraphic, George Thompson Services, and others who sell a range of fonts for most applications. Plan B might be to contact companies such as Arnor and Digita in the hope that they have a Bengali font available as an option, or know where to find one for you.

Clod Kennedy

Please help! I'm losing my hair fast. I own an A500, a second drive and a memory expansion. I'm up to part five in the Absolute Beginners' series, and my problem is that the Shell window won't stay open.

I double click on the icon, a Shell opens, then immediately disappears. I have started again from scratch, but end up with the same results. I have part six, but can't go on because I can't talk to the disk.

Neville Lord, London

If you stop what you're doing, go to a nearby window, and listen very carefully, it is quite possible you may be able to catch the sound of Mr Kennedy's teeth being extracted, sans anaesthetic, with a

➤

Imploder tips

I am writing with some useful information for virus hunters. When a file virus infects a file and the user crunches that file using a program like PowerPacker or Imploder, virus killers cannot detect the bogus code because it is crunched.

Most killers will advise you to decrunch the file and check it, but what about files crunched with Imploder which say they are protected from decrunching? I have the answer to this problem if the person has Imploder 1.0 to 3.0.

Imploder produces two types of crunched programs, one which uses the explode.library, and the other type which uses the complete decrunch header. These files can be altered to enable the user to decrunch them if they do the following.

First find out if the file requires the explode.library. This can be done by trying to decrunch the file when Imploder says it is a "protected library implode" or a "protected normal implode".

Then, if the file is a "protected library implode", use a hex editor such as NewZap and change byte $54 from $80 to $00, and save the file, which should then be decrunchable.

If the file is a "protected normal implode", change byte $48 from $4E to $61 and byte $49 from $94 to $2E. Again, the file should now decrunch.

After this, even protected, crunched imploder files won't be safe from the better virus killers.

Andrew Pearce, Truro

Thanks for the tip, Andrew. Any information we receive on the latest virus developments, or new ways in which to fight them, will be passed on, so don't stop sending it in, folks.

pair of pliers. Yes, he's cocked it up again and forgot to tell everyone to make sure that the RUN command is in the C: directory of MyDisk.

His proffered excuse, that RUN is so common and on every disk he's ever seen, was summarily dismissed just prior to his being dragged screaming to the dentist's chair.

To remedy the latest Kennedy calamity, boot from Workbench, open Shell, then type:

```
COPY C:RUN TO MYDISK:C
COPY C:EXECUTE TO MYDISK:C
```

After a couple of disk swaps, the problem should disappear.

Font short-cut

I have an A500 Plus and have purchased two PD disk full of fonts. However, although I can use the Show/All files command to see the font icons in the disk window, I can't actually see what the font looks lie unless I load it to Workbench.

If subsequently I find it is not what I want, I have to go through the process again with the next font. Is there a quick way to see font types so that I can choose before changing my prefs settings?

Secondly, can I print instructions found on PD disks which don't appear to have any print facility of their own?

Pete Southey, Chichester

To examine a list of CompuGraphic fonts before deciding which to use on Workbench, the only effective method I can think of would be to run the prefs Font program, then list the fonts on the disk, using the Show toggle to display the fonts in the small viewer window.

Before running the prefs Fonts program, make sure you use an Alias to tell AmigaDOS to look on the floppy disk for its fonts. For example, if the PD disk was in your internal drive, you'd type:

```
ASSIGN FONTS: DF0:
```

before trying to list the fonts.

Text files found on PD disks, whether crunched or uncrunched, can be viewed and printed using the MMPP program found on every Amiga Computing CoverDisk. The arp.library file requester is used when MMPP selects files, so to copy both to your Workbench disk from this month's CoverDisk, type

```
COPY COVERDISK37:C/MMPP TO C:
COPY COVERDISK37:LIBS/ARP.LIBRARY TO LIBS:
```

Once you have copied MMPP across, viewing text files is easy. Just type MMPP and a file requester will appear from which the file can be selected. To print a text file, load it into MMPP, then hold down Alt, Shift, and O.

Please note that for printing purposes, RUN and TYPE must also be in the C: directory of the disk from which MMPP is launched.

Groan...

In response to all 345,897 of you who sent in letters this month about printers ... eek!

Printers are taking a holiday this month, because I'm basically sick to the back teeth with printer hassles. Perhaps the fact that my own printer has suddenly started to print wobbly text and banded graphics has prompted the decision, perhaps not.

Anyway, sorry if you were looking forward to some illuminating discussions on printer drivers this month.

NTSC niggles

This letter is in response to a reply given to a letter from Andrew Griffiths in the September issue, in which he describes problems with some games. The possible fault that you failed to mention is that the second-hand machine he purchased is probably an NTSC machine.

How do I know? I own one! The fact that some games load at all is probably due to his having a Fatter Agnus with PAL/NTSC capability. I'm surprised you didn't mention the possibility that he has an NTSC machine.

Now for my problem. I have an A500 Plus with 2Mb chip RAM, and it seems that when I run certain games the machine locks up with a Guru message which turns out to be insufficient memory.

I used to have a rev. 6A A500 with 512k chip and 512k fast RAM before I purchased the Plus, and everything worked fine on it.

Since everything worked fine before, I am inclined to think that a lack of fast RAM is causing my problems. Is it? Is there a chance that my wimpy power supply has something to do with it?

Luis Reich, RAF Alconbury

The reason I didn't mention the possibility that Mr Griffiths has an NTSC machine was that his letter describes parts of the screen sometimes appearing in the wrong place, and this is an unusual symptom not normally associated with simple NTSC problems.

However, you're right – the possibility should have been mentioned, so if you're reading this, Mr Griffiths, have your Amiga checked to make sure it's a PAL model.

As for the memory problem, many games will definitely need fast RAM, especially those which involve a great deal of animation and full-screen action. A machine with just chip RAM, unless it's an old 512k A500, will suffer problems of this sort all the time.

To wait, or not to wait?

I am considering buying an accelerator and would appreciate your help in the matter.

Should I buy a cheap accelerator now or save my money until the A800 arrives? It seems to me that given the lukewarm reception for the A600, the A800 could easily become the next base level Amiga, and I don't want to spend £300 on my A500 Plus to find out it is as obsolete as ever. Would I be able to use my accelerator with the new Amigas?

Finally, as the A600 has no DMA port, I assume the A800 won't have one either. Does this mean my hard drive will be useless?

David McGuire, Cumbernauld

The GVP casing, power supply, and interface will be useless in the newer Amigas, because none of them will feature a DMA port. However, the 52Mb Quantum drive unit can be attached to another SCSI interface and used with the new machines as long as they support the Zorro expansion slot. All signs are that at least the new A2200 will have Zorro slots, but the A800 (whose existence has still to be confirmed) is rumoured to be an ultra slim design with support for only the internal IDE hard drives used with the A600. If this is the case, the A2200 is a better buy for you, as you have a hard drive already which can be cannabalised for use with the new machine.

If you feel nervous about buying your own SCSI interface, don't be. The connections are simple. Just dismantle the GVP, attach the hard drive unit to the new card using the four mounting positions found on all hard drives and cards, then connect the 50-pin SCSI cable and the power connector from the bord to the drive.

Don't buy a cheaper accelerator for the moment, especially not a 68020-based card, as the new Amigas will be fitted with 68020 chips. Wait until the prices of the A2200 and A800 (if it exists!) are announced before making a decision.

High-end heartache

I own an Amiga 2000 which has been expanded with the 33MHz GVP 68030 combo board and the Commodore XT bridgeboard. Total fast RAM is 12Mb, which I intend to increase to 16Mb in the near future.

I am tired of running out of chip RAM when digitising or using hi-res graphics. If I can get hold of the ECS upgrade, can I get the 2Mb chip RAM using the GVP board, and will I have to change my Agnus chip?

Of the 12Mb RAM, 2Mb has been allocated to the bridgeboard, and 2Mb is extended 32-bit RAM over and above the standard Amiga RAM limit.

I also have a 3Mb 16-bit RAM card, so is it possible to use this board with the combo, thus giving me 8 to 12Mb of extended memory? If this is the case, would the extra chip RAM use the 32-bit or the 16-bit memory?

Leading on from the above query, I am considering upgrading further to take advantage of 24-bit graphics by purchasing the Harlequin card.

What concerns me is that the Harlequin can have its own 4Mb memory bank. Will this clash with my existing memory? Also, will I be able to have the Harlequin's alpha channel option?

A E Wigley, Petworth

You seem to be a bit confused about the way in which your system memory is being configured. The Amiga will almost never mix 32-bit and 16-bit RAM, and of all the 32-bit peripherals available, your GVP combo is the most unlikely to do so.

Most 32-bit RAM expansions, such as those found on accelerator cards, will automatically configure to the high memory addresses above the normal system memory, be this 16-bit fast RAM or 24-bit DMA chip RAM, which is why it is quite possible to stuff the Amiga full to the brim with 8Mb 16-bit fast RAM and then add another 32Mb of 32-bit RAM on top.

As long as your combo card is booted with the correct jumper settings for the amount of RAM onboard, you should be able to plug in a fully populated 16-bit board with ease.

Extra chip RAM for the A2000 is available in only one form at the moment, the MegaChip 2000 (reviewed this issue). This add-on combines an extra 1Mb chip RAM and an 8375 Super Agnus to enable the 2Mb chip RAM you seek.

Harlequin memory is dedicated VRAM and is found installed on the Harlequin card. This memory will not interfere with your Amiga, nor will it confuse the machine. In addition, the Harlequin will not use normal Amiga RAM beyond that needed to run the software, such as TV Paint and VLab, so don't have any RAM concerns on the Harlequin's part.

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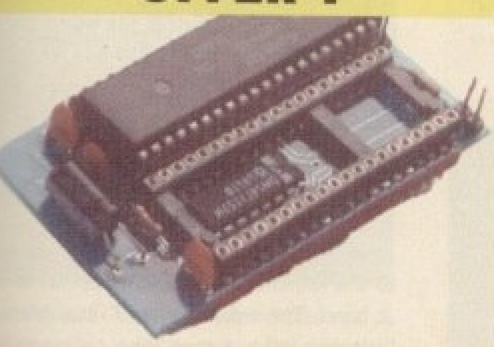
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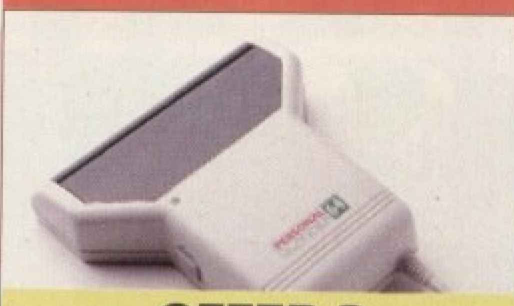


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A real gem

Paul Austin looks on as the Aussies attempt to prove you don't need a kitchen full of gadgets to cook up spectacular graphics

If for some inexplicable reason you missed our taster of the new OpalVision in *AC*'s October DTV Almanac, the news that yet another 24-bit board has arrived may not exactly leave you quivering with expectation.

If, however, you did partake of that mouth-watering prose, you're probably rapidly approaching the jelly stage.

For the poor souls who missed the masterpiece, a brief resume is worthwhile. The main claim of the new silicon sensation is its potential as a PAL successor to the much-hyped, but never present Video Toaster.

Although the toast of the States and the apple of many an anorak's eye, the afore mentioned accessory never made it across the pond.

After much wailing and gnashing of teeth, the unwashed European masses finally gave up and resigned themselves to life without the ultimate kitchen companion.

Ray of light

But what's this? Just as all hope is lost, a ray of light emanates from "down under". The source of the soap for the aforementioned masses is OpalVision. If the new board and more precisely its expansion modules actually match the marketing, it will be all that the toaster ever was and more.

In the past the main problem with the myriad of existing 24-bit systems has been the lack of the one commodity that the OpalVision appears to have in abundance – expandability. Even such illustrious 24-bit titles as Amiga Centre Scotland's Harlequin have suffered several broadsides due to the initial lack of frame grabbing and genlocking – although both of these above are now catered for. Other systems such as Avideo have made impressive and cheap attempts at enhanced flexibility with the introduction of basic animation plus 24-bit and Amiga image combination.

More expensive systems such as the IV24 have tried to lay claim to the multimedia crown with PIP display, genlocking and frame grabbing thanks to additional hardware, while cheap and cheerful systems have brought high quality art to the masses in the form of the extremely impressive and flexible DCTV composite display system.

With all these systems pitching for the punters' hard-earned cash, the world of 24-bit art has become a financial and technical minefield, with most boards lacking that one vital feature while boasting numerous others that the opposition can't match.

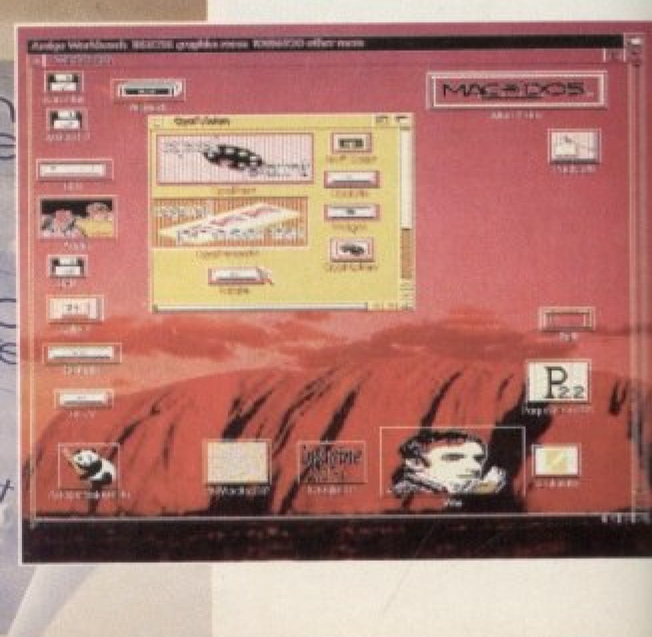
Sticky

Now thanks to OpalVision, the answer to this rather sticky problem appears to be at hand. The word "appears" may seem a little vague for a man who claims to be reviewing the board, but the OpalVision system isn't a simple all in one unit – in fact all the major elements are modular.

Although we do indeed have the board, the version at hand is strictly limited to the basic configuration, devoid of the numerous modules which claim to make the system the ultimate 24-bit environment.

As yet these additional modules are still unavailable, so our overview will focus on the basic setup and its attendant software, to be followed in due course by an update on all the additional modules as and when they become available. Even though our

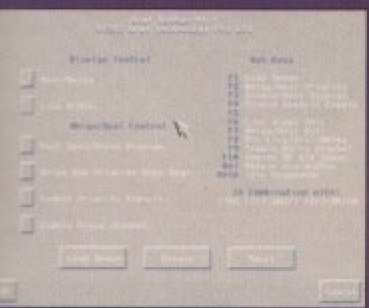




Opal Hotkey

Although a minor miracle in comparison to the paint and presentation programs, Opal Hotkey is still an essential addition to the board's overall software repertoire. It can be called directly from the start-up sequence.

As the name suggests, everything is



controlled via hot key combinations to provide a whole host of Amiga, OpalVision, alpha channel and live video display combinations. The video option of course requiring the grabber/genlock/keyer module.

With this program active via either a script, icon or CLI command, you can load any 24-bit image as a Workbench backdrop, or perhaps as a replacement for colour zero within programs such as DPaint.

Thanks to the invisible hot key control you can switch between modes instantly, employ or remove stencils, kill or replace backdrops and toggle between dual or single display at will while maintaining full multitasking.

board doesn't boast the full complement of add-ons, the whole appeal of the system is in its potential growth. Only time will tell if the finished products will match the claims made by the OpalVision marketing machine.

Because modular expansion is so important to the system, we'll first deal with what's waiting in the wings for any potential investor, moving on to the impressive array of features that the basic system can already offer.

Like almost all the major manufacturers, the creators of OpalVision haven't missed the importance of frame grabbing to the ➤

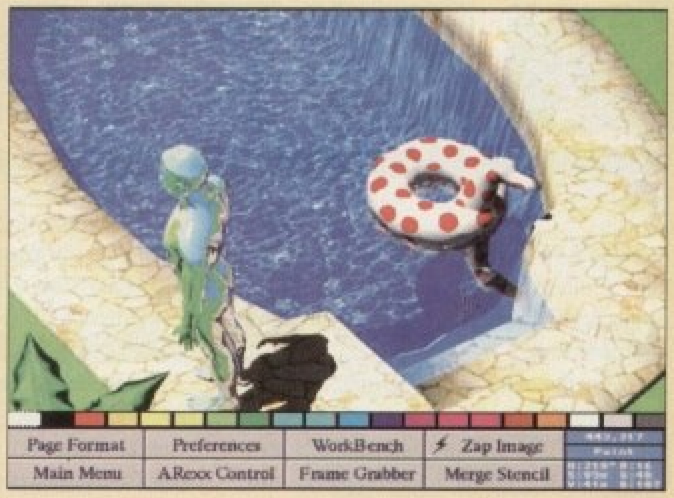
OpalPaint

As any manufacturer will tell you, the one thing that can make or break any board is the paint package which accompanies its initial release. In the case of OpalVision, Centaur Development have absolutely nothing to worry about.

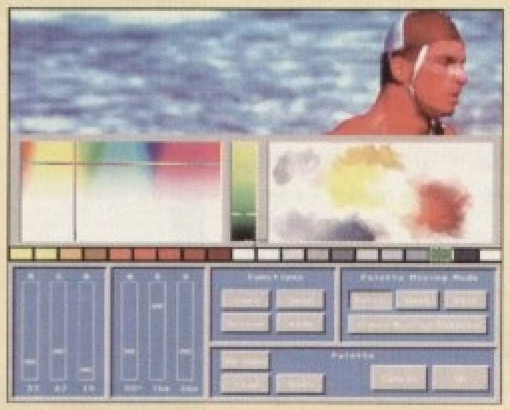
After using all the major paint packages on the market I can confidently state that this "freebie" bundled with the board is definitely one of the best around.

I stress the "freebie" point because the program's only real rival, TVPaint, is far from free, costing as much as £800 on the Harlequin display board, although it is much cheaper on other systems.

If you're a veteran of standard Amiga painting environments you're sure to feel at home with OpalPaint as everything including hot keys closely follows the combinations pioneered by our old friend DPaint.



All the program controls are very logically arranged and easy to understand thanks not only to excellent design but to a small window on the main control panel which pops up useful comments on the purpose of the various menu items.



Painting and processing times are quite acceptable with truly excellent result from the impressive selection of tools. Features such a graduated fills, multiple brush handling, transparency and stencils have been excellently implemented.

Aside from the usual collection of painting tools, there's a fine selection of power options and original features, such as unlimited page size which can be scrolled around at will.

Another such feature is the virtual memory option, which allows you to specify that the unlimited number of spare pages, unused brushes, and regions outside the work area are to be stored on disk rather than eating valuable RAM.

Other features include direct access to the frame grabber, but perhaps most exciting of all is the addition of a revolutionary function entitled Artist Tools, which brings image processing into the painting process.

After selecting the Modes option on the main menu, a fresh requester appears containing 18 standard processing and painting effects such as tinting, contrast, brightness, mosaic, gamma, colourise and so on.

This initial 18 are supplemented by four definable button which can add an additional four effects from a selection of 25 on disk.

Once selected, the effects act just like paint, but process rather than colour. The huge plus of this approach is the degree of processing control hitherto impossible within any other paint package.

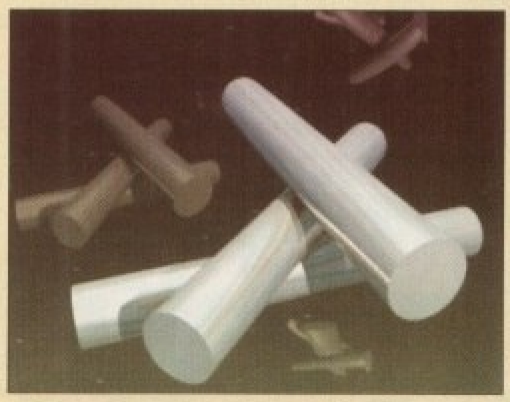
In addition, a wide selection of painting styles are also on hand including airbrush, pencil, chalk, watercolour and something called Texta, which appears to emulate felt tips.

To complement the painting styles, a selection of five paper types have been added ranging from plain through to hessian, all lending their own feel and style to your creations.

Apart from the excellent ease of use and the quality of the standard painting tools and effects, the Artist tools alone easily puts OpalPaint on a par with power packages such as TVPaint.

The power of the option is extended with a zap feature which automatically applies the selected and of course definable effect to the entire image.

As a result, applying overall processing couldn't be simpler and is sure to mean far fewer trips to ADPro or ImageMaster for final tweaking. Unfortunately there are a few unfinished features which are promised for the next update of the software. These include ARexx and Alpha channel support plus the unusual magic wand feature which allows area fills within predefined fill parameters.



In other words the software will employ definable tolerances and look for logical points within the image at which to terminate the fill.

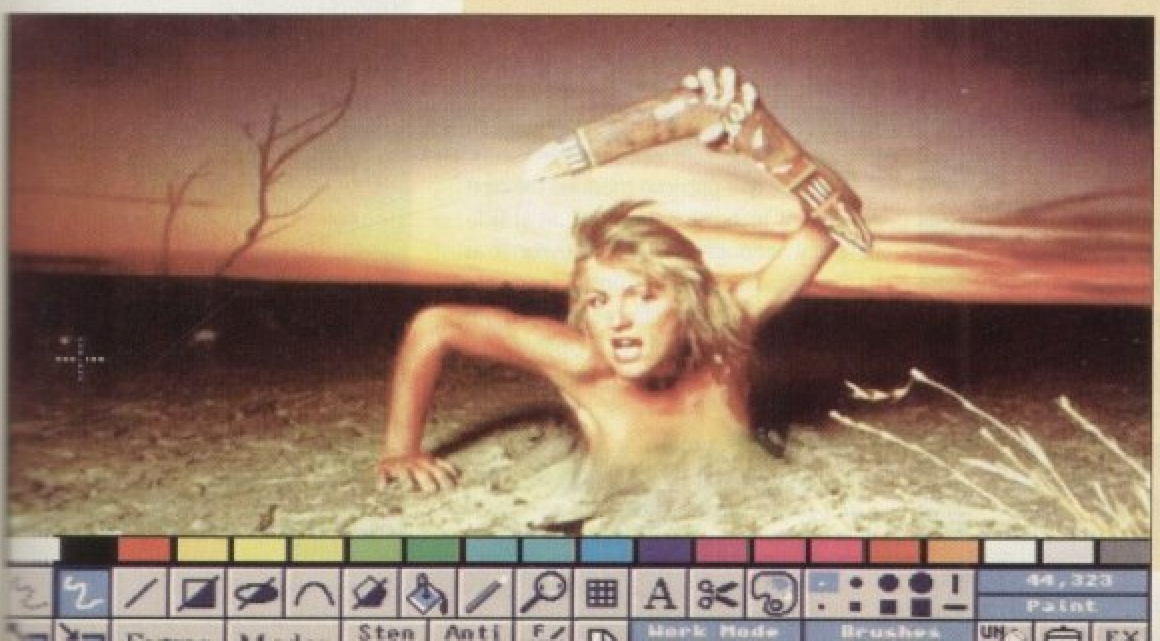
As a result, there will be no need to draw around tricky elements within an image prior to filling with either solid colours, gradients or textures.

After a lot of searching there's only one area in which I can find fault. This concerns the lack of density control over brushes cut from the canvas.

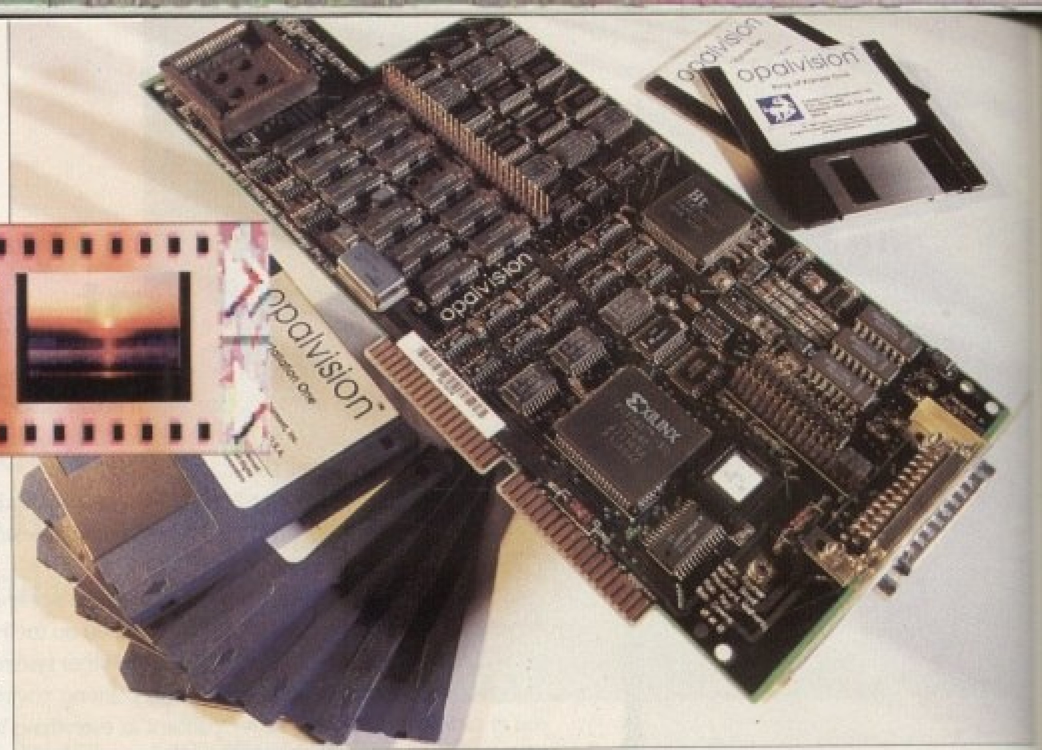
Although gradient fills and transparency are extremely well implemented, with up to three user defined brushes available at any one time, brushes cut from the canvas can only be warped oriented and resized.

In other words, it appears impossible to apply a definable graduated transparency fade to a brush, although it is possible to adjust the overall transparency.

When this annoying limitation is addressed and the alpha channel and ARexx are implemented, I'm fairly certain OpalPaint could make a very strong claim as one of the best all-round 24-bit package on the market. Not bad going for a freebie...







average 24-bit artist. As a result, a grabber and genlock have been combined into a single unit which plugs directly onto the motherboard.

Once the aforementioned grabber/genlock combination is in place it not only does both of the above but also acts as a composite encoder and decoder, and allows 256-level linear keying.

As you might expect from a product vying to break into the professional market, an impressive array of signal outputs are on hand including our old friend composite, plus S-VHS or Hi8. Quality control rests in the capable hands of the Sony broadcast camera chipset which comes as standard with the module.

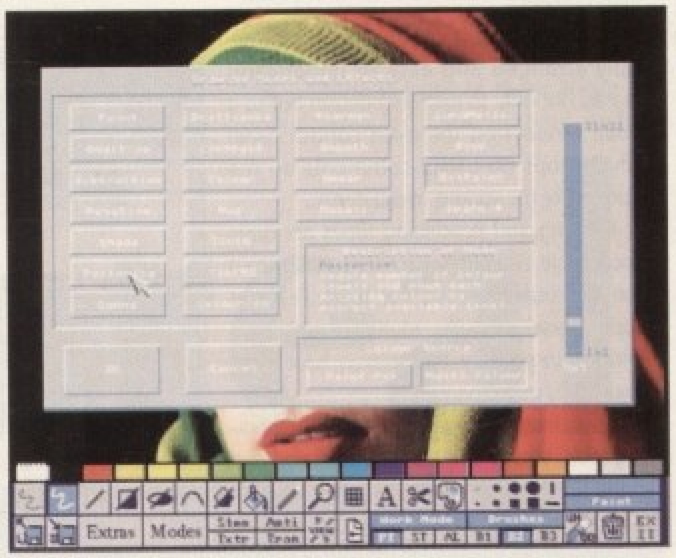
Live video

Aside from pure output quality, the internal genlock also boasts 256-level transparency overlay via the board's built-in alpha channel for both Opal and Amiga imagery, allowing live video to appear through transparent or semi-transparent areas along with the usual array of standard keying options.

Another added bonus is the chroma keyer, which has just been added to the grabber/genlock combination. With this final addition it appears that any would-be OpalVision owner has everything on a single board, except a Luma-keyer. Who knows, even that may appear in time.

As you might expect, all genlocking operations are software controlled, allowing automated fading, switching, and keying in a similar manner to the Progressive's Video Blender which has pioneered the field of Amiga-based, software-driven genlock control.

As mentioned above, frame grabbing is perhaps one of the main prerequisites of any serious 24-bit system. Again if reality matches the marketing, OpalVision will boast the same degree of grabbing quality that has already made Vlab the market leader.



Like the Vlab system, the OpalVision grabber will be capable of 24-bit capture of both single frames and sequences. An impressive features list, especially considering that all grabbing can be done from a live video – no pausing required.

As a single addition the genlock/grabber combination is impressive enough, but when combined with the next module the potential power of OpalVision really starts to show.

The partner in question is the rather clumsily titled OpalVision Quad-input production switcher. This unit plugs directly into the frame grabber/genlock combination allowing software-controlled switching between two separate video sources, Amiga graphics and of course OpalVision images.

The software control will not just allow direct switching between sources but will employ a variety of wipes, fades, cuts and dissolves to provide the transitions between any of the four available signals.

"...the same degree of grabbing quality that has made Vlab the market leader"

As you might expect, the varied world of video is again well catered for with inputs available for S-VHS, Hi8 and composite, with the subsequent output as either composite or S-VHS.

After the two previous modules the next may seem to be something of an anticlimax, but although not quiet as dynamic as its predecessors, OpalVision's scan-rate converter – flicker fixer to me and you – is nevertheless a vital addition if OpalVision if it is to fulfil its designers' aspirations in the DTP department.

Also, for the professional 24-bit artist who has to stare at the screen all day long, a rock-solid flicker free display is essential to



Back to basics

Here are the bare bones which are all too easily overlooked thanks to the potential promise of the modules.

Even if the modules weren't a potential part of the system, OpalVision is still a very impressive board in its basic form. The unit comes in both A500-style external and A1500/2000/3000 internal versions. Both come with 1.5Mb of on-board RAM as standard.

As you've probably guessed, the board boasts full 24-bit spec, with 16.7 million colours – any pixel any colour, of course. Just like Avideo, the board has the ability to display Amiga and OpalVision images simultaneously either in front or behind which can be expanded later to include video with the addition of the grabber/genlock/keyer module.

Broadcast quality

On-screen resolutions stretch from all standard Amiga modes right up to broadcast quality 768 x 580. Again like Avideo the board offers an alternative 15-bit animation mode in med and hi-res plus 8-bit double buffered output in all resolutions.

Unfortunately due to a very tight deadline I've not as yet explored the board's potential as an animation tool, but if it follows the same lines as Avideo, screen update will at best manage between 12 to 15 FPS while handling 15-bit imagery.

As well as animation, the board offers an on-board VSLI Microcode graphics processor which allows resolution changes, stencil modes and the impressive array of transitions which form the driving force behind the Opal Presents software.

Another very welcome feature is provided by OpalVision's "palette mapped" design which allows real-time screen update as opposed to the infuriating method of applying the paint and then sitting back as the colours slowly appear on-screen.

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avoid permanent eye strain. Although good news for many newcomers, the addition of a flicker fixer won't ease the financial pain that many will feel from discarding their original flicker fixers in order to add OpalVision in the first place.

Obsolete

Of course this only applies to an unlucky few, but it's a cross many A1500/2000 owners will have to bear as the internal OpalVision fits directly into the video slot on such machines, instantly rendering old flicker fixers obsolete or at least difficult to use without frequent card switching and monitor re-connection.

Although all of the above provide an impressive array of enhancements, it's the next and final piece in the OpalVision jigsaw which is set to make it the European equivalent of the ill-fated Toaster.

Again with yet more culinary overtones, the Roaster Chip is the final modular addition responsible for the Toaster-style effects that the makers claim are possible via OpalVision.

When installed into a noticeably vacant spot on the OpalVision motherboard, the Roaster will apparently allow real-time processing and morphing of live video, OpalVision images and Amiga graphics.

Thanks to the power of the new chip, the makers claim that it will be a simple matter to take live video, wrap it onto a sphere, wave it like a flag and produce page turns to reveal secondary images, flips or scaling effects – in short, the type of effects that made the Toaster so special.

This is, literally, an unlimited supply of effects which are quiet simply beyond the reach of the competition. The implementation of DVEs or Digital Video Effects is the one area which made the Toaster the legend it has become, and if implemented properly is sure to do the same for OpalVision.

Along with the long awaited DVE's comes a more familiar trick, namely Picture In Picture or PIP, a feature already available on the IV24 in a 12-bit form but now supplied in the full glory of 24-bit within the Opal system with its scalable windows, zoom options and scrolling all part and parcel of the overall effect.

Modular additions

Although the marketing claims for all the board's modular additions are mouth-watering, unlike some other publications *AC* will wait until the hardware arrives before screaming its praises.

Fortunately the wait may not be a long one, as Ben Vost of Micro-PACE has already quoted an arrival time of two months for all the additional modules, including the Roaster Chip.

As soon as they cross the pond, *AC* will bring you all the facts and answer the Toaster question once and for all. Apparently, all the modules are complete and are going through final testing as we speak.

The verdict? The facts speak for themselves. With the basic board and accompanying software retailing for £899, it would still be a strong contender for anyone's cash even without the options for expansion.

With the ability to turn the system into a tailor made 24-bit workstation complete with genlock, frame grabber, chroma key, flicker fixer, PIP, true 24-bit double buffered display, video switcher, broadcast resolution and of course the unique DVEs, the Opal is quite simply the only choice for any 24-bit all-rounder who needs a system that will grow with their imagination and needs. Quite simply, it's a spectacular product.

King of Karate

Now for the final program to accompany OpalVision. As the name has probably hinted, this particular package isn't in the usual artistic vein.

Although a first, and a fine example of the board's potential as an animation medium, I can't help thinking it's a classic case of marketing gone mad in a desperate attempt to attract the "more money than sense" sector of the market.

Still, no matter what the reasoning behind inclusion, it's yet another first which is both fast and of course very colourful – if perhaps a little lacking on depth and lasting appeal.

The game itself is very simple, with the two combatants taking to the field of battle on one of three backdrops. Each fighter is controlled by a player – no computer opponents available I'm afraid.

The controls are the usual joystick combinations of button and non-button manoeuvres.

Although fast and furious, the action only lasts one bout before you're added to the high score table and returned to the main menu to choose another backdrop.

As you can tell it's pretty basic stuff on the gameplay side and confirms its limited long term appeal thanks to the 5.5Mb of valuable disk space it eats on installation.

Product information

OpalVision is a product of
Centaur Development

Supplier: Micro-PACE

Tel: 0753 551888

Price: £899

Opal Presents

Alongside the essential and excellent paint package, Centaur Development have release yet another 24-bit innovation in the form of the Amiga's first 24-bit presentation system.

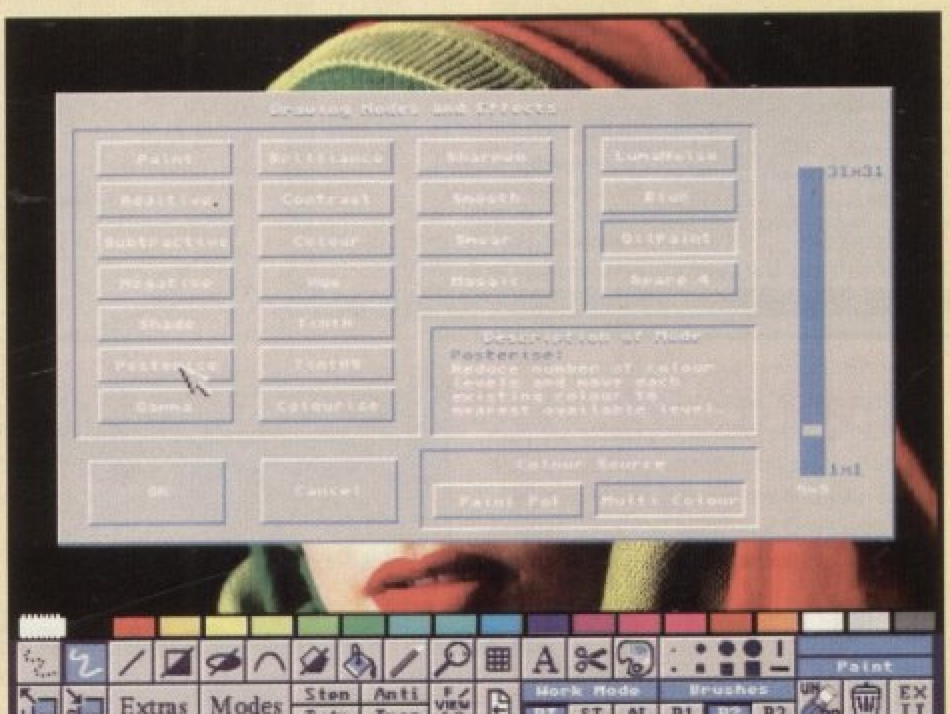
Unfortunately – in my humble opinion – the claim that Opal Presents is a fully blown presentation system is a little ambitious. The title of a designer slide show would perhaps be closer to the mark.

Although very impressive, there are a few points which no self-respecting presentation system should be without. But before I completely destroy the program's credibility it's well worth looking at some of its impressive strengths.

As you can see from the screenshots, Opal Presents has an attractive and intuitive interface which allows you to load as many 24-bit images as you wish, assign any one of a whole host of wipes or fades, define the effect speed and display time and specify the display format whether it be with or without Amiga imagery.

Once an image, whether it be IFF, JPEG or Opal's own OV_Fast format, is loaded, its thumbnail will appear within the top strip. These thumbnails are present throughout the whole range of OpalVision software providing instant file recognition at a glance.

Once a thumbnail is highlighted, its own display settings can be defined separately for all the graphics within the show. When all the images in the series are defined, the resulting script can be saved ready for instant playback within the program, or launched independently via an ARexx script.



The really amazing aspect of the program is the incredible smoothness, speed and overall quality of the effects, which easily match and often outstrip even such illustrious names as Scala and Broadcast Titler II.

Quite literally they have to be seen to be believed. Unfortunately it may be these very effects that destroy the program's claim as a true presentation system. As the display options show, the combination of Opal and Amiga images is a high priority. Unfortunately, as transitions between Opal images occur, the Amiga element of the overall display is removed and only returns when the transition is complete.

As a result, animation with a variety of backgrounds, or employing programs such as Scala to add animated text, would be at best a rather clumsy affair.

Having said that, if you're willing to have the accompanying message as part of the Opal image – avoiding the Amiga element altogether – basic static titling is still possible and impressive when combined with the amazing wipes and fades.

The only other query concerning Opal Presents is a slight dislike of certain hard disk controllers. After trying the system on several machines I did on occasion encounter slight difficulties concerning Amiga and Opal screen flicker during transitions.

As a result, it's worth enquiring with Micro-PACE as to the suitability of your existing equipment prior to investment.

Even with these reservations, it's worth stressing that Opal Presents is nevertheless a real innovation in as much at it is the first additional program on any board that provides an animated stage onto which 24-bit art can appear. A 24-bit Scala it may not be, but as display tool it's in a league of its own.

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Announcing Lapcat...

a new easy-to-use transfer solution for sending files between different types of computer.

Lapcat was designed for the NC100, Amstrad's new Notepad Computer. To make file transfer easy something new was needed; the difficulties in sending files via the serial port are well known – the problems of different connectors, different types of leads, baud rates and the software at the other end. **Lapcat** is a combined software/hardware package that transfers files quickly via the parallel port.

The **Lapcat** software is built into the Amstrad NC100. The standard package consists of the **Lapcat** lead plus software on disk for the computer of your choice. This will enable you to transfer files between an NC100 and your chosen computer. **Lapcat** is not just for NC100 owners because you can buy software to transfer between any two of the supported computers. No technical knowledge is needed.

Lapcat prices: (Please state clearly the type of computer you are using – PC, Atari, Amiga).

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STEP FORWARD into the world of microdeal MUSIC

SAMPLERS & SEQUENCERS EXPLAINED

SAMPLE: A sound that has been loaded into a computer and is represented by numbers (digital) rather than noises (analogue).
SAMPLER: Usually a small cartridge that allows you to take sounds from a microphone (with amplification), tape, CD etc and record (digitize) them into your computers memory. Once in the memory a sample (sound) can be changed using the sampling software.
SAMPLING SOFTWARE: Allows you to alter sounds that have been digitized by the SAMPLER. Normal functions with sampling software include loading and saving a sample disk, altering the sample by cutting, speeding up/down, fading in/out, joining to other samples and much much more.
SEQUENCER: Allows you to take samples and play them back in an order (sequence) that you determine. For example if you sampled a piano note, a sequencer would allow you to play that note back at different pitches and in a sequence you decide. Your one note loaded into a sequencer can become a complete piece of piano music.
MIDI INTERFACE: A small cartridge which plugs into your Amiga and allows a Midi instrument (usually a Keyboard) to communicate with the computer. If you already have a keyboard then you need to check that it has a Midi Port on it for it to work with a computer.

AMAS 2

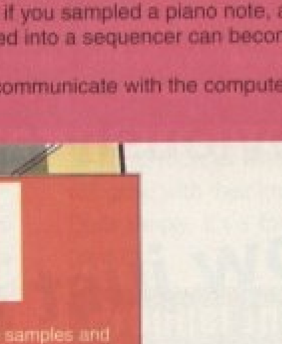
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AMAS 2's features include software adjustable input volume controls, 3D display of sample frequencies, stereo oscilloscope, stereo spectrum analysers, 11 customisable special effects, full midi support with keyboard mapping, built-in midi interface with in/out/thru ports, microphone input port, Mono or Stereo editing with full suite of edit controls, plus much much more



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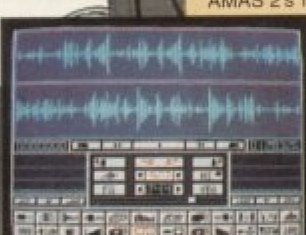
QUARTET

This sophisticated sequencer allows you to take samples and sequence them into music. Imagine your samples as a band with QUARTET as the conductor, your band is composed of 16 instruments of which 4 can play at any one time. QUARTET comes with 100 instruments and sounds for inclusion in your own compositions and further sounds can be added using AMAS 2 and STEREO MASTER or most other quality samplers. Music can be input from the Amigas' keyboard by mouse or if you have a synthesiser keyboard with a midi out socket by playing on the keyboard. Control of samples include Tempo, Volume, Pitch together with a built-in editor for changing samples without exiting QUARTET. Who knows you could easily be tomorrows "Adamski" or "Mozart" with this highly acclaimed package.



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NINJAS, CARS AND SEMI-NAKED WOMEN

ISSUE FOURTEEN • NOVEMBER 1992

GAMER

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ZOOL

STUFF SONIC



Plus...

REVIEWS... ZOOL • LOTUS III • LIVERPOOL • POOL • FIRE FORCE • HEAD 2 HEAD • RED ZONE • TREASURES OF THE SAVAGE FRONTIER **ALSO...** Nigel Mansell, Hero Quest II and Daemonsgate previewed • plus Lure of the Temptress – The Final Solution

ONword

Misinformed and proud

To keep you moaning bar-stewards happy while you're waiting for the release of B17 and Atac, Microprose are about to release Gunship 2000, a hack, slash and burn violence fest.

At long last Gamer brings you Zool, the game that is to be a sharp poke in the botty for Sonic The Hedgehog – not that any Amiga owners are really arsed about Sonic anyway but it's here and what a chicken butty it is indeedy.

It's a platformy thing created by a graphics team with a penchant for dolly mixtures and dodgy films – read on, read on.

The Ace of Spades

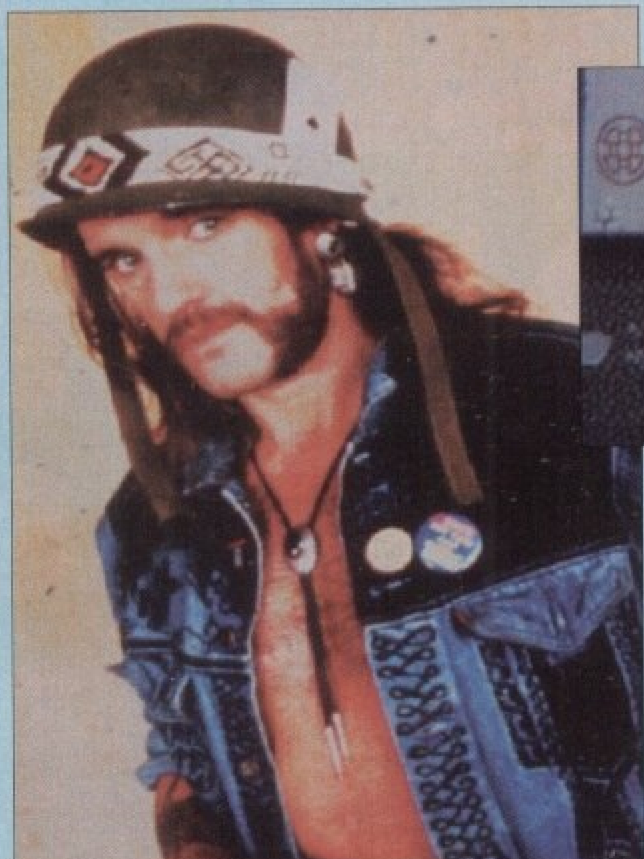
I remember reading an NME review about Motorhead. It said that nothing, but nothing, can prepare you for their testicle-shaking volume. If your aim in life is to be loud and socially unacceptable then read on.

The "eccentric" exploits of one of the world's favourite heavy metal bands can be experienced by everyone, even your gran.

You play Lemmy, the warty bass player, whose talents stretch to being Jimi Hendix's roadie and being thrown out of Hawkwind for taking to many drugs. The idea is to release your friends from the clutches of somebody.

The actual game can be described as a beat-'em-up along the lines of Golden Axe, but it's infinitely more silly. The player has to run around Karaoke Land, Nashville Land, Hippy Land, Gothic Land, Hip Hop Land and Rave Land, where foolish floating E-Heads are out to do over Lemmy. You really would have to be on some sort of drugs to take him on.

As a bonus there are grab a groupie sessions, trash that hotel room, and slapping an oriental man around then face with a fish. You also have to knock Stonehenge over onto the hippies before they float away. Updates as we have them...







OSCILLATING HAZELNUT

This month	Last month	Title	Publisher	Price
1	➤ 1	Sensible Soccer	Renegade	£25.99
2	▲ NE	Civilisation	Microprose	£34.99
3	▲ NE	Espana The Games'92	Ocean	£29.99
4	▲ NE	Seuck	GBH	£9.99
5	▲ 11	James Pond	GBH	£7.99
6	▲ NE	Magic Land Dizzy	Codemasters	£7.99
7	▲ 12	f16 Combat Pilot	Action 16	£9.99
8	▲ NE	Lotus Turbo Challenge	GBH	£9.99
9	▼ 3	Monkey Island 2	US Gold	£37.99
10	▲ NE	Crazy Cars 3	Titus	£25.99
11	▲ NE	Panza Kick Boxing	Kixx	£9.99
12	▼ 4	Fire and Ice	Renegade	£25.99
13	▼ 7	First division Manager	Codemasters	£7.99
14	▼ 8	Formula One Grand Prix	Microprose	£34.99
15	▼ 14	Pro Tennis Tour	Hit Squad	£7.99
16	▼ 5	Lure of the Temptress	Virgin	£30.99
17	▲ NE	falcon	Action 16	£14.99
18	▼ 13	graham Taylors Soccer	krisalis	£25.99
19	▼ 6	New Zealand Story	Hit Squad	£7.99
20	▼ 17	eye of the Beholder 2	US Gold	£35.99

ELSPA PENGUIN CHARTS

GAMER

INNER VISION

Step inside, but wipe thy feet, mucky buggers

Fighter frenzy

Those lovely people at Domark have released a double bill of fighter sims. The games featured are F-19 and MiG-29M Superfulcrum, two of the most up to date and plenty raved about Sim things in the last 12 months.

Both of the programs sport nice little touches such as your pilot blacking out because of G-Force – fun for all the family.

Gripping

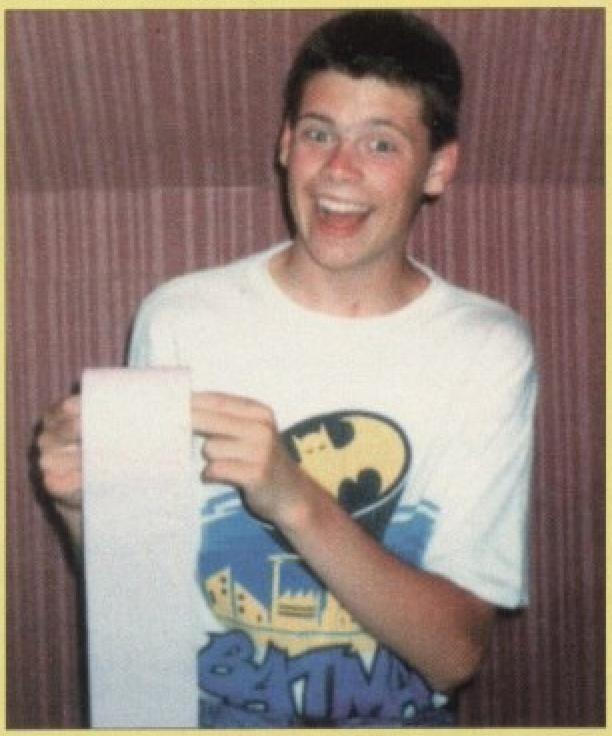
The editorship of the world's cheesiest games magazine is still in the balance, kids – who will be the grinning custodian of the hundreds of slaves which toil endlessly for your enjoyment? Who knows, certainly not me, and who am I? Who is writing this irrelevant toss? Watch this space.

All together now

It didn't take long – lock up your daughters and shackle your sheep, the Biff is back. Ha ha, his love for Gamer made him leave his job on another magazine and come fleeing back to this stalwart organ. He's not doing much this month but next month all hell breaks loose at Biff the Kiff does Silly Putty.

To inject a small amount of jollification into the On Word pages we are running a small competition.

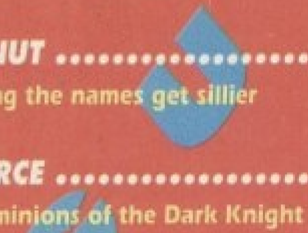
The question is thus – who is this ex-editor of Gamer and how silly does he look? Answers on a Melon to the Get Dan Back Competition, and we'll think up some worthwhile prize to send you.



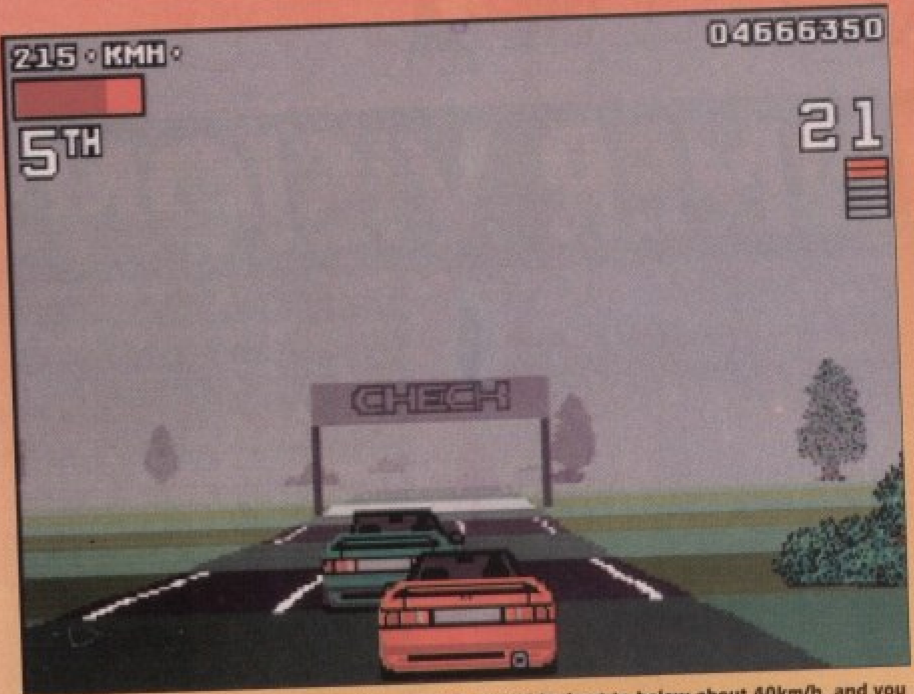
WHERE ARE WE?

tenor vocals - richard "the sound of music" williams
dark horse - daniel "photo" whitehead
bitter and twisted - ben "revenge" styles
ICI - phil "chemicals" morse
the tooth fairy - biff "sex god" maddock
arty blokes - terry "raunchy" thiele
alan "risque" jones
ad sales - jane conway
0625 878888
Yes yes bring me your jam jars
I pay a pretty price for a
half pint milk bottle!!
My god it's full of stars!
gumff
next month:secure your sanitary towels ladies biffs on the job and we get more staff!!!

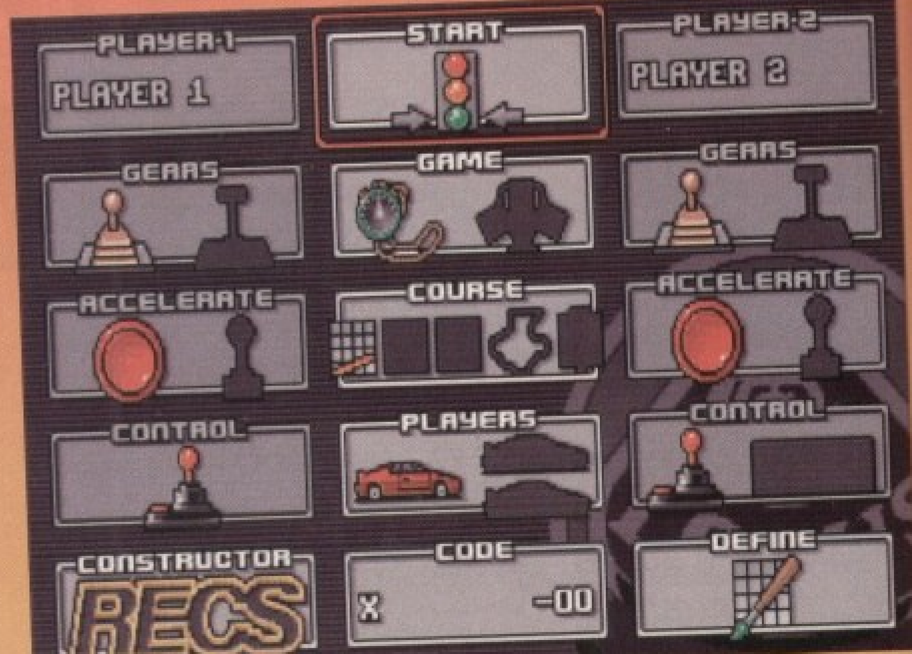
REVIEWS


REGS...



Don't they know that during fog conditions speed should be kept to below about 40km/h, and you should always maintain a large distance between you and the car in front? They should be arrested, the lot of them



Let's think. What silly and slightly comical names can we enter today? And should we bung it on extra-easy or try to look good and stick it on impossible mode?

Shouldn't it be Lotus 3: The Final spin-off?

LOTUS III THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

In the beginning there was Outrun, and it was feeble. And Magnetic Fields did look at the Amiga and think, "This computer needs a decent driving game," and so they set about creating one.

First they created Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge. It was a 3D behind-the-car-viewpoint game, which featured a simultaneous split-screen two-player mode which was great fun to play.

It also had lots of options, even down to selecting your in-car music from a CD player screen. Magnetic Fields looked down at Lotus, and saw that it was good.

Then they created the sequel, and lo! It featured a full-screen one-player mode, a checkpoint race system instead of the previous circuits, a second type of Lotus car to drive, and even more in-car CD music.

They created it in the image of the first game, and Magnetic Fields looked down at Lotus 2, and saw that it was quite good too.

Finally (we hope), in the year of our lord 1992, Magnetic Fields looked down on the world and thought, "Hang on, we could make a packet doing yet another sequel." Thus was born Lotus III: The Ultimate Challenge. And it was OK too.

So what does this have that the previous two didn't? Well, it combines the best aspects of both the prequels to produce what is actually quite a playable driving game. You can decide whether you want to hurtle around either checkpoint-type races or circuits with a varying number of laps, and also whether you want to race against the clock or against the other computer-controlled cars.

There's also the addition of a track designer. You can set the perimeters for a track in the form of percentages, and the things you can twiddle around with include the amount of hills and curves, and the race distance. You can design loads of your own courses, and they can be either circuits or checkpoint jobs.

The game is very well presented, with some stylish graphics and absolutely excellent music. The in-car CD now offers, among others, a dancey, ravey, hardcore-you-know-the-score, midnight beatbox ecstasy job, a reasonably heavy rock affair, and the Zool music (?), the last of which is utterly groovy.

You'll find everyone around you starts humming the tune when this comes on (at least they did here in the office).

You can choose the control system you want for your car, although I found the default Fire-button acceleration setup easiest to cope with.

Select whether you want to drive a Lotus Esprit, an Elan SE, or an M200, each of which are shown on a trendy rotating fact screen, which also shows weird little graphs of acceleration and so on.

You'll eventually get to the game bit. The

GREMLIN • £25.99 • 1/2 meg • Joystick/keyboard • Out now


Ugh, look at the colour scheme on that there bluey-purple car – disgusting



Streams and puddles can be found on tracks such as this one. Don't they know they should be driving carefully, etc



Well, this is the sleek and sexy M200, the car that's new to the Lotus series. It's a shame it's the same as the other two



If you fancy yourself as a bit of a track designer, hop along to this screen and you can poke about with all sorts of weird bits and bobs

starting light goes on, and you accelerate away. Then you've got to successfully negotiate your way through several tracks, which are different depending whether you chose easy, medium or hard difficulty settings.

These stages vary between checkpoint races and circuit races, and can take place in a variety of conditions, including the old favourites, wind, fog and rain.

The graphics are pretty much the same as in the two previous games, and they move at a fairly zippy rate, although one amusing thing we noticed is that for some reason, on some tracks it can look like you're reversing the car along.

Apart from that slightly strange quirk, the game looks fairly good, with colourful backdrops and sprites.

The car is quite responsive and easy to handle, and with a bit of practice you'll soon find yourself managing to stay on the road on those tough icy corners.

One thing that Lotus games have never been is realistic. When you hit an obstacle or another car, you simply slow down by about 15 km/h. Still, if anything, this adds to the playability, as you don't find yourself out of the game just because of one slip-up.

This also produces some excellent two-player frolics as you fiercely battle to be the first to the finishing line.

While Lotus 3 isn't original, and certainly isn't the best game in recent months, it's nevertheless a playable product with a fair bit of depth. There are lots of levels to go through, and the facility to design your own adds a great deal to the game. I think it's the best game in its field, because it manages to combine the best elements of the previous games and adds a few new ones too. Shell out for this and you won't be too disappointed.

David

VISION

Nice enough graphics, although a couple of glitches.

AUDIO

Brilliant music thumping in the background, good car sounds too.

PLAYABILITY

Good, especially when you've a chum to pummel into a soft pulp.

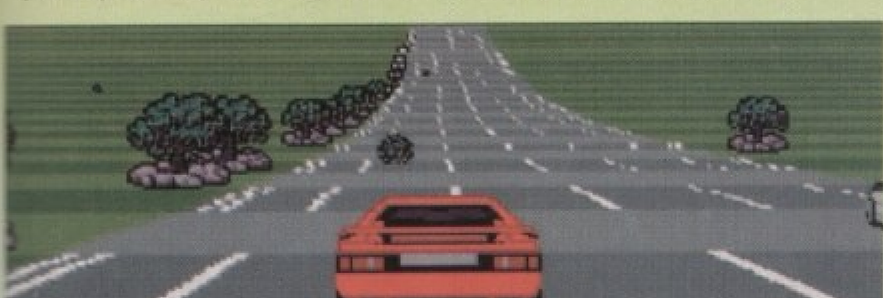
ADDICTION

A bit samey in the long term, but should last a few weeks.

84%



Yes, Lotus 3 lets you too have the chance to enter silly player names and then laugh hysterically when they are innocently displayed on-screen by an unsuspecting Amiga

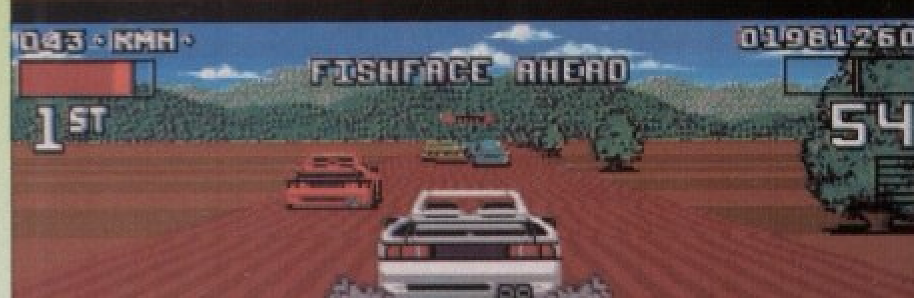


Maybe Lotus 3 is designed for escapists. It's great, you know, out on the open road, heading for the hills, the fresh air and the smell of exhaust fumes...



Stick Lotus 3 in two-player mode and you and a chum can slog it out to see who's the most maniacally suicidal and reckless driver





Lotus is great, because it's the only driving game where you can hit anything you want and still keep going, without so much as a dent in the car

the source 2

Daemonsgate 1– Dorovan's Key

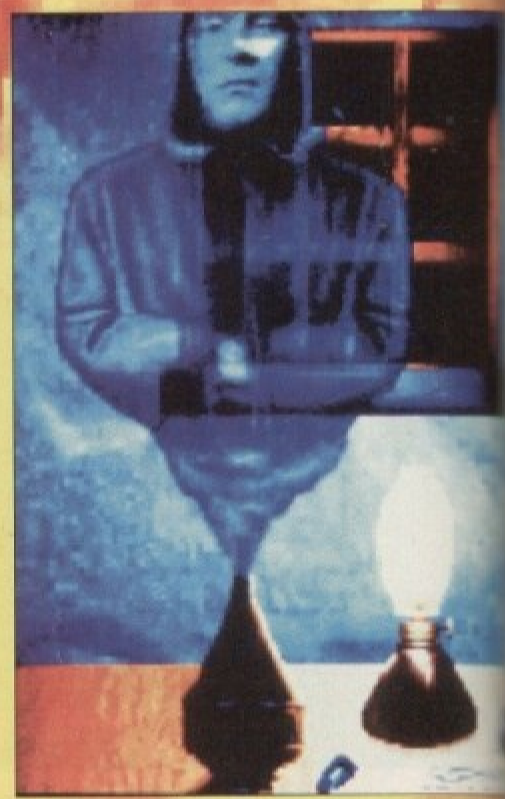
Daemonsgate is the delightful title given to Gremlin's brand new role-playing game and apparently it's going to be the largest and most in depth game of its genre yet. We shall see, but first let me tell you a little story.

Six months ago all contact was lost with the ancient kingdom of Elsopea, not something that the rulers of other kingdoms were too worried about because the Elsopeans were a strange race.

Strange probably isn't the word, but any race that watches the evening and Sunday editions of Eldorado is definitely a bit bonkers. For nearly a thousand years, they have lived a reclusive existence, rarely coming into contact with their neighbours.

Suddenly, strange reports began to filter in from the small hamlets (now listen up kids, a hamlet is a small village, especially one without a church. Oh and it's also a make of well-known cigars sold in most newsagents.– Educational Ed) to the south of Tromis.

It appeared that a rather large Daemonic army (gusp!) of unknown origin (yowsers!) was moving through the Border Peaks from Elsopea destroying everything in its path (gasp!).







Besieged

The armed forces of Tormis tried to stop the advance, but to no avail and the city was soon besieged. Alone and without any help from their neighbours, the inhabitants of Tormis had to sit and wait it out and the Daemonic hordes were happy to let them sit there and sweat.

Well, it's about this time when some sort of hero or heroes appear and kick the butts of the Daemonic hordes. You play the part of Captain Gustavus of the Imperial guard and by the request of the city council, you have to get a band of willing mercenaries and find a way out of the besieged city.

From there you have to find a certain elderly Elsopean who knows how to defeat the Daemonic hordes, give them a bashing and be home in time for tea. Easy, innit?

Remember the hordes could attack at any time and the city's defences cannot withstand a prolonged assault. The survival of the kingdoms and the world is in your hands and if that isn't dramatic, I don't know what is. The game is set upon a world called Hestor, for which a (take a deep breath here if reading out loud) detailed rationalised background has been produced including a fully detailed "hythos" (?), a complex social structure, realistic ecology and logically laid out geograph.

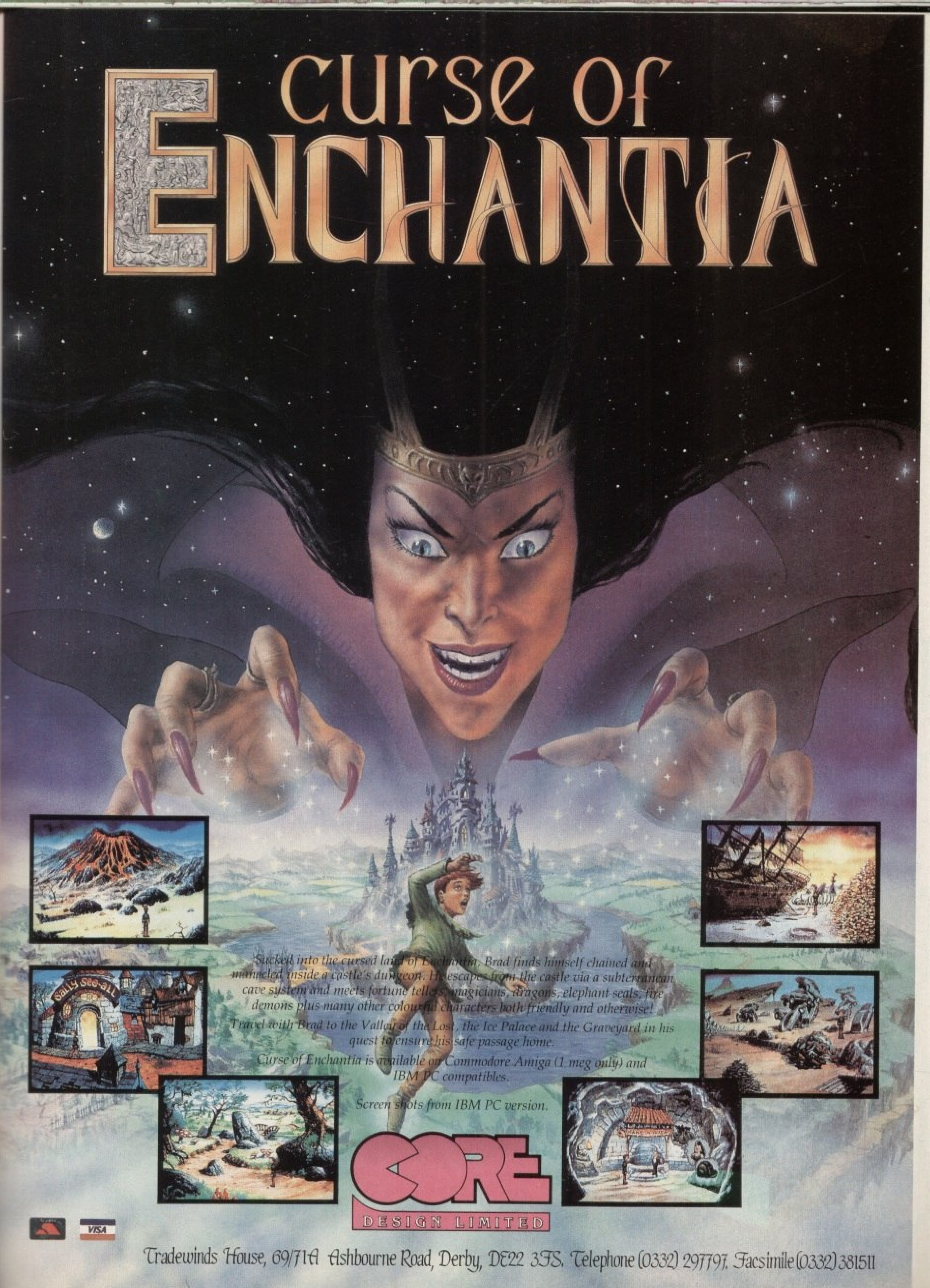
What a mouthful – big words never impressed anyone especially when you don't know what the hell they're going on about.

Well it was all compiled over six months and Gremlin assure me that it's going to be one of the most rational fantasy environments ever created for a computer game.

As with almost every role-playing game, the player in Daemonsgate controls a number of characters – in this case eight – utilising the various skills and abilities of each team member to overcome the tasks and problems that lie in their way.

The game is made up of five major elements, which consist of land travel, town travel, combat, conversation and magic. In total there are over 100,000 screens of towns and over 5,000 town inhabitants and this apparently is the largest map size and non-player characters yet seen in a RPG.

As you can see from the screenshots, the graphics are top notch and thus it could be Gremlin's finest release yet, we shall see. Daemonsgate 1 – Dorovan's Key will be out in time for Christmas and will cost you a penny short of £35, but by the looks of things it'll be worth every penny.


CURSE OF ENCHANTIA
Sally See-All
Sucked into the cursed land of Enchantia, Brad finds himself chained and manacled inside a castle's dungeon. He escapes from the castle via a subterranean cave system and meets fortune tellers, magicians, dragons, elephant seals, fire demons plus many other colourful characters both friendly and otherwise!
Travel with Brad to the Valley of the Lost, the Ice Palace and the Graveyard in his quest to ensure his safe passage home.
Curse of Enchantia is available on Commodore Amiga (1 meg only) and IBM PC compatibles.
Screen shots from IBM PC version.
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DESIGN LIMITED
VISA
Tradewinds House, 69/71A Ashbourne Road, Derby, DE22 3FS. Telephone (0332) 297797. Facsimile (0332) 381511

This game is going to go down in history as one of the greatest of all time. It's absolutely fantastic in every respect – graphics, sound, everything. This could be a record – Ben getting through a game review without absolutely hacking the poor thing to bits.

I don't know where to start! Near the beginning would probably be a option, so sit comfortably and I will begin.

It's a sort of platformy thing but not, and it's a sort of collect a lot thingy, but not really. The closest thing to it is Sonic the Spikey Haired Git of a Hedgehog, but this knocks the socks off Sonic.

The whole thing is completely manic from beginning to end. When you boot up the game there are various sequences going on in the background and a soundtrack that is similar to, well nothing apart from Mr Bungle or Frank Zappa.

There's everything flying round the screen leaving you completely baffled as to what is going on, and it's wonderful.

The bit that really impressed me was the Options menu. You can change the difficulty level which makes it harder for the nasties on-screen to bump you off.

Next there is the music selector. I am one of a dying breed – a person who likes funk music. What did I happen to find on the selector? A funk track. At first I was a bit dubious, but then I actually heard it and it was proper funk music which really made my day.

Along with the funk music are rock and rave settings and something called Green Bizarre. Then you have an Inertia setting so old Zool doesn't go from standing still to 100mph instantly, and a Continue option.

God this is serious, I haven't even got to the game yet and I'm already raving. Let us scuttle along, children, in a crab-like fashion.

As you see from the screenshots, our matey Zool is an odd looking character, a bit like an ant I thought, but an agile little chappie anyway.

The various levels all have themes. The first level's theme is sweets, with all the beasties look like dolly mixtures or fruit gums and all the backgrounds being jellies or lollies.

The end-of-level baddie steals the show – a mish mash of all manner of sweets that spits liquid at our hero.

The baddies do all sorts of things to try and stop you on your way, but Zool is armed and dangerous and a ninja from the Nth dimension (which is just near Bob's Discount Bean Bag Emporium, if you must know). To get around the levels a lot of the time you have to go up cliffs. You can't actually climb them but you can sort of jump off and up and back on again – quite cunning really.

Apart from the climbing there isn't much to your movement on the screen but for jumping and running. The aim is to reach end of each level by simply piling through all the nasties.

Unlike Sonic you don't always progress in the same direction. In the bottom left-hand corner there is a pointer which tells you which direction to go in. At the end of each level there is the customary baddie, which does take a little doing.

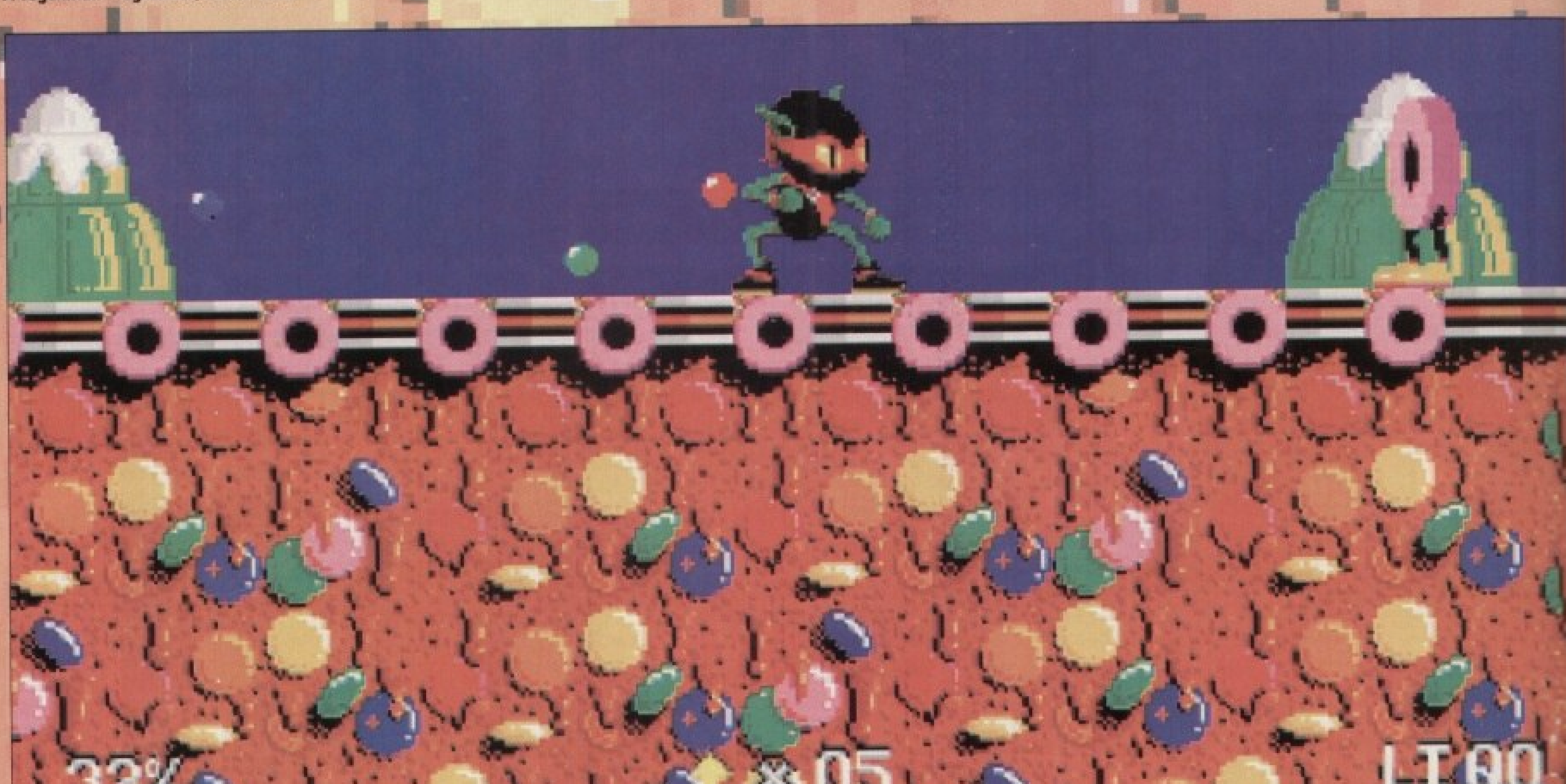
To bump off all the beasties you have bullets of a sort and a sword. But old Zool can

Stuff Sonic



A vegetarian's nightmare, bacon walls





You look a bit funny

only use his sword while flying through the air, spinning. It sounds like a bit of a handicap but it is frightfully effective when wasting wine gums.

To help you along the way there are a few power-ups which you can get, like shields and so on. My favourite is the yin-yang which creates another Zool who follows you around. He fires at the same time you do and basically does the biz.

I stumbled across a bonus level which is a shoot-'em-up sort of thing where you can pick up extra energy and things. I kept getting chased afterwards by these clouds – it gave me quite a funny turn, y'know. It reminded me of Project X a bit which is another of my fave games.

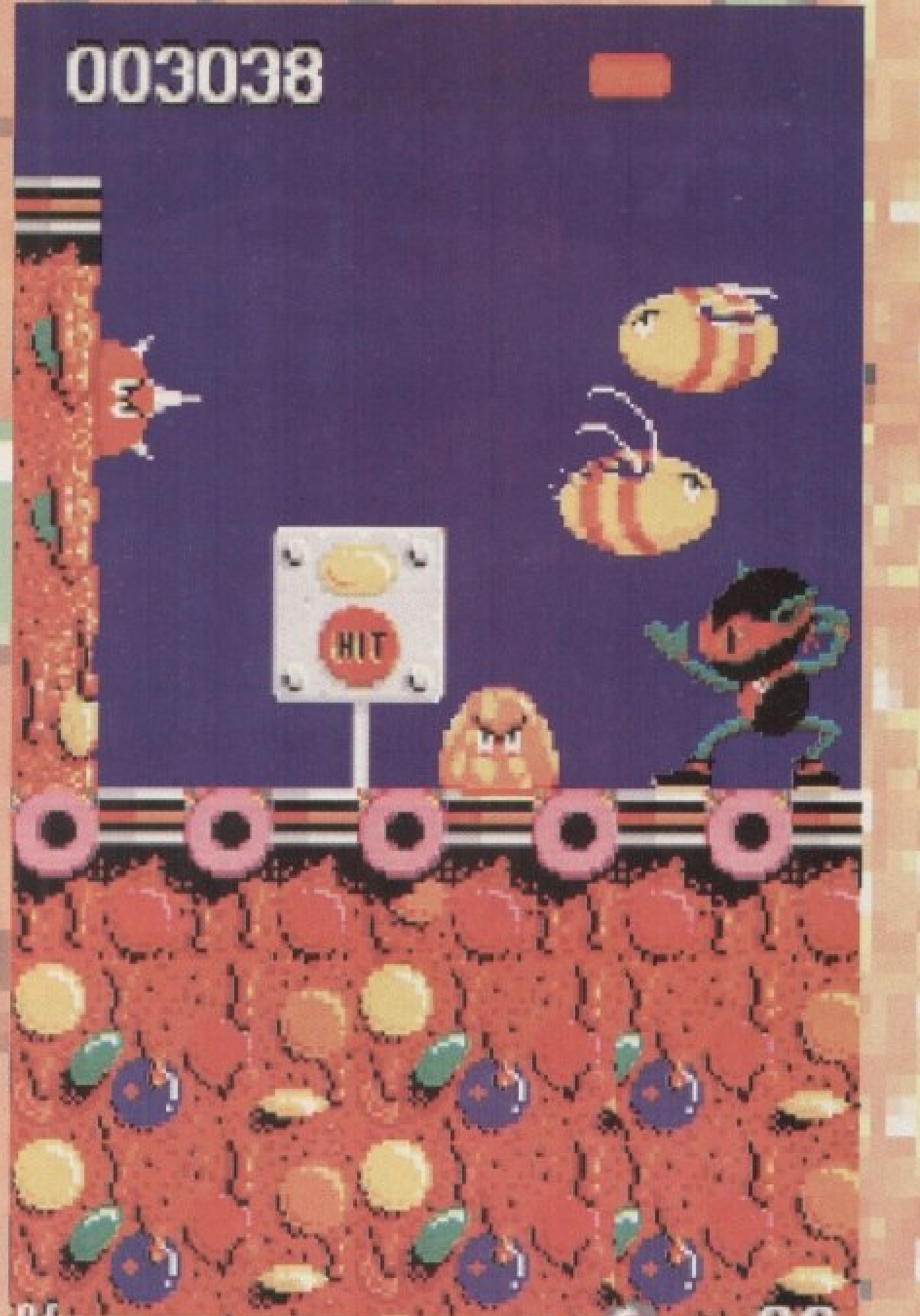
There are some really nice touches – for instance, on the second level (the music level) there are notes which come out of the saxophone and which you can ride on. There's also a big piano to walk along. It's this sort of detail that makes the game so special.

My one and only niggle about Zool is the difficulty. It is a very tricky game, but this is combated by the Continue function – vital to your progression through the levels.

As I said earlier, Zool will be around for a long time. It is one of the most original games I've seen on the Amiga. If you buy a game this week, buy Zool – you won't regret it.

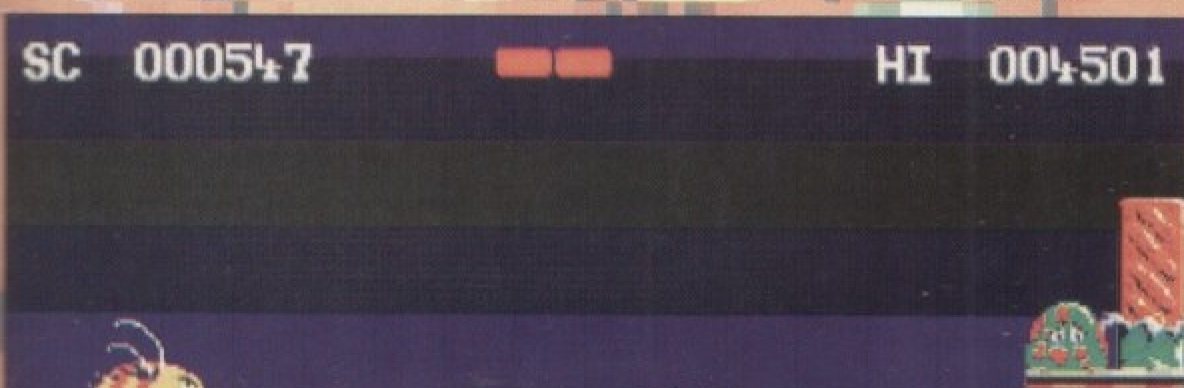
Ben





The bonus stage

Gremlin ▪ £25.99 ▪ 1/2 meg ▪ Joystick ▪ Out now



Trip out and freaky man, Smartie city

VISION GGGGG
Absolutely stunning. Wow.

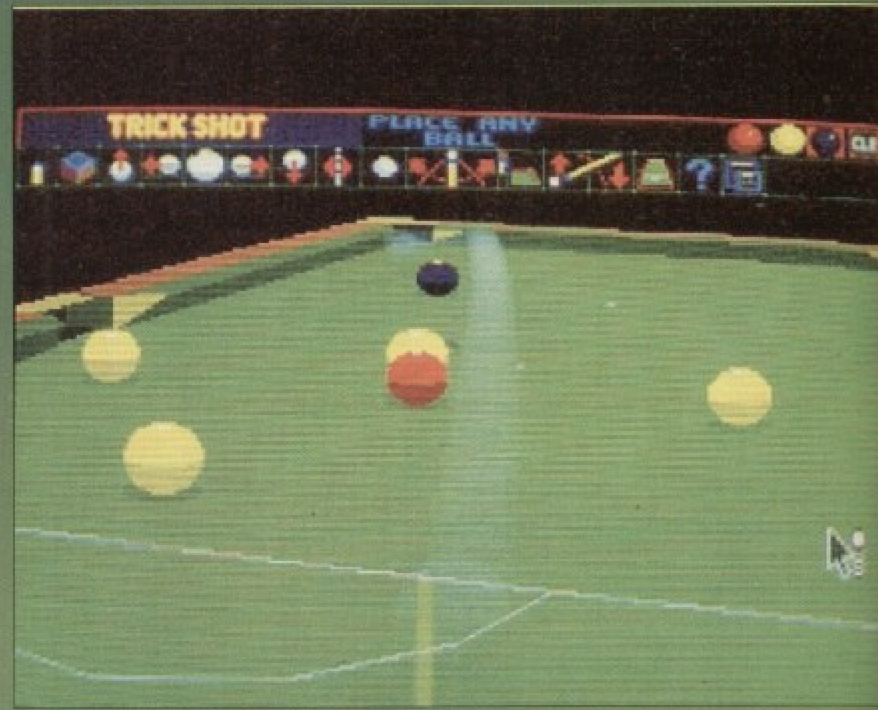
AUDIO GGGGG
Come on, it's got a funk setting.

PLAYABILITY GGGGG
Won't get boring for a long while.

ADDICTION GGGGG
Gimee more, gimee more.

97%





The sound of balls clacking together

ARCHER MaCLEAN'S POOL

VIRGIN ▪ £25.99 ▪ 1/2 Meg ▪ Mouse ▪ Out now

Archer Maclean (no relation to the producers of that stripy toothpaste) shook the earth with the supreme brilliance and general all-round greatness of his hit snooker sim Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker.

Now, several months later, Archer plots to continue his quest for world domination in the field of green tables covered in balls, with his very own rather sexy pool game.

Consequently we find ourselves transported to the familiar scene; you know, pool hall – smoky air, fat bloke with a pint looking enviously at your jeans, Phil Collins and the rest of Genesis trying to make a pop video...

Pool is a game which features balls being hit with a stick and bouncing off one another. The object of the game is to put some balls into little string bags dangling from the corners of a large green table.

That's quite easy. However, it's not as simple as that. You can only "pot" certain balls in a certain order, and that's what people tend to find difficult about playing pool.

Archer's game has an advantage because in this you can't get your trousers stolen. It features the same graphics engine as Jimmy White's Snooker, but he's modified the icon system a bit to try and make it more easy to use.

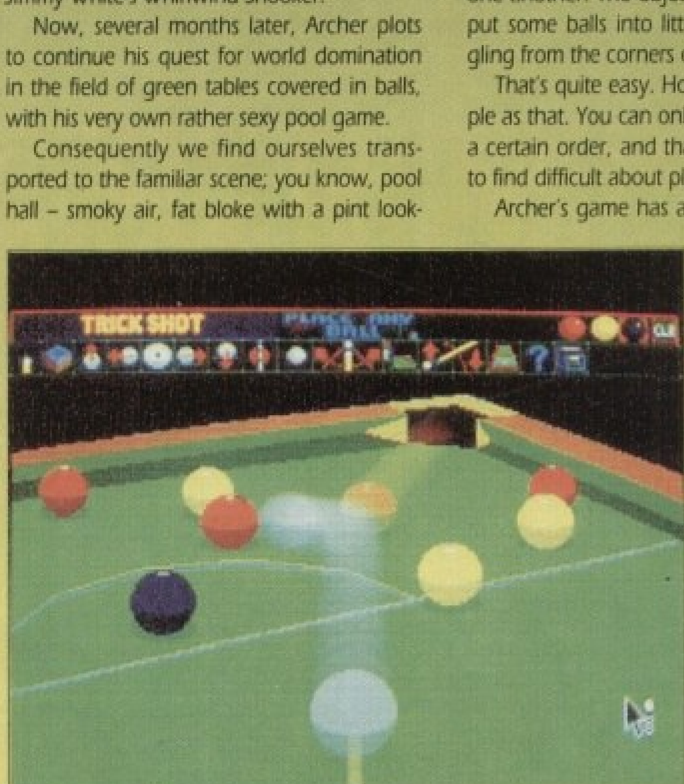
You can choose whether to play eight-ball USA rules, UK rules, or nine-ball USA rules games.

The eight-ball version uses the familiar red and yellow balls that we all know and love. The nine-ball version features numbered balls complete with scaled numbers on the side, so the close you get to the ball, the larger the number gets.

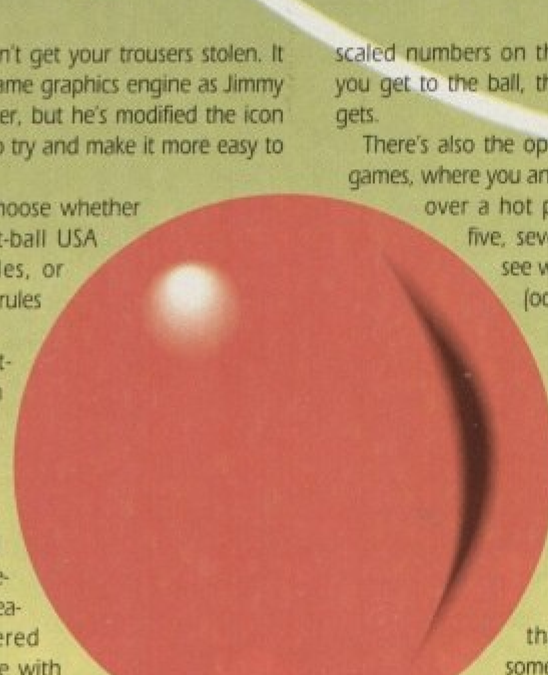
There's also the option to play "Best of" games, where you and a chum battle it ou over a hot pool table for three, five, seven or nine games to see who comes out on top (ooo-er).

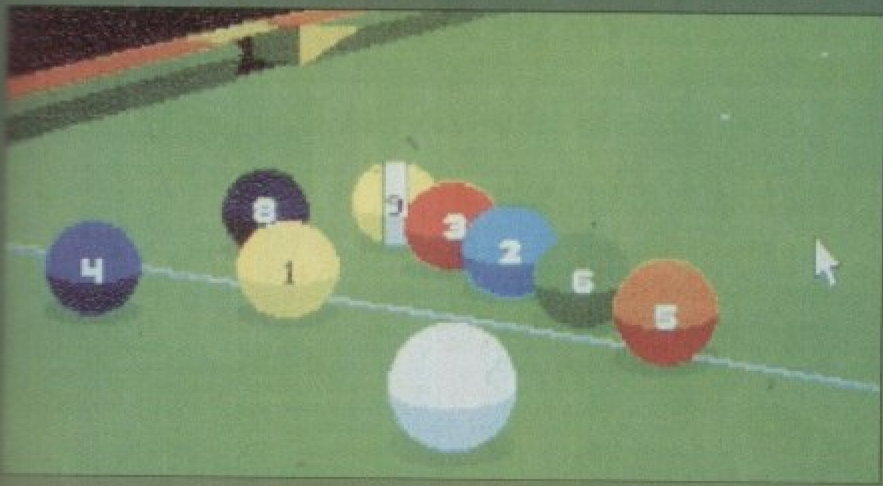
There's a full eight player tournament mode too, so you can invite hordes of your friends over to gasp in awe at your uncanny pool prowess.

If it just so happens that your pool skill is something akin to that of



At least with the computer version you don't have to lean over the table with your posterior in the air just to reach those awkward shots





a dead newt, then put it into trick shot mode and you can position the balls as you so choose, setting up a shot that not even Stevie Wonder could miss.

There are 20 computer players to choose from instead of the previous four, and they all have an individual style of play. Some of them are so good they can do three-ball cannons, and they're quite difficult to do.

An amusing feature of Jimmy White's were the flies which descended to annoy you if you took too long over a shot, and the silly faces pulled by the balls. Archer was keen to introduce new effects, but has found people preferred the old ones, so they're back in all their glory.

And for those of you who like statistics there's a somewhat tasty invention called the Rankometer. This tells you how well you've been doing with a trendy little graph affair, the number of balls you've potted, and so on.

The original game got oodles of good ratings from virtually every magazine under the sun. The follow-up easily manages to live up to everything that was expected of it.

It does everything the original did and more, only this time it's pool that's being simulated. It's due for release in no less than five languages, and it's a bit of a scorcher to while away those long winter nights.

So get that cue out, chalk it up or do whatever you normally do to it, and prepare to shoot some pool.

David

VISION
About as exciting as a pool game could be.

AUDIO
Decent ball-banging noises.

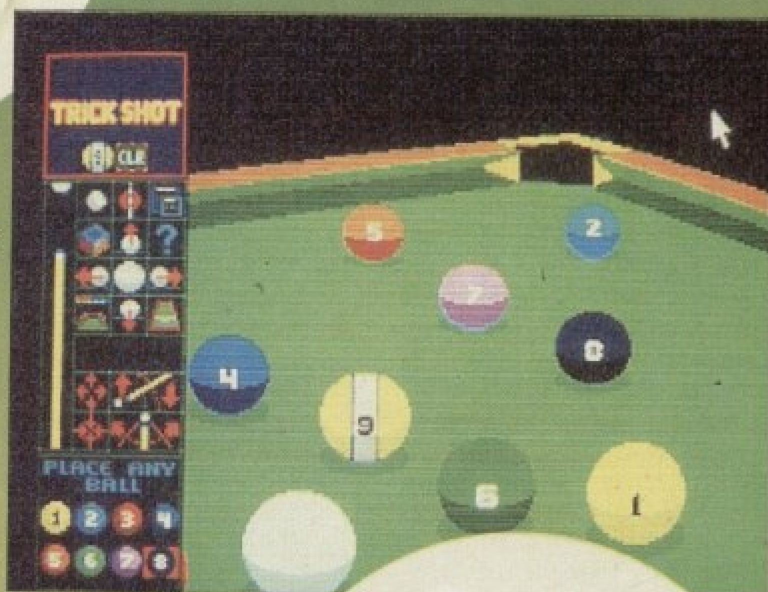
PLAYABILITY
Tournament mode's a good idea.

ADDICTION
Something to come back to.

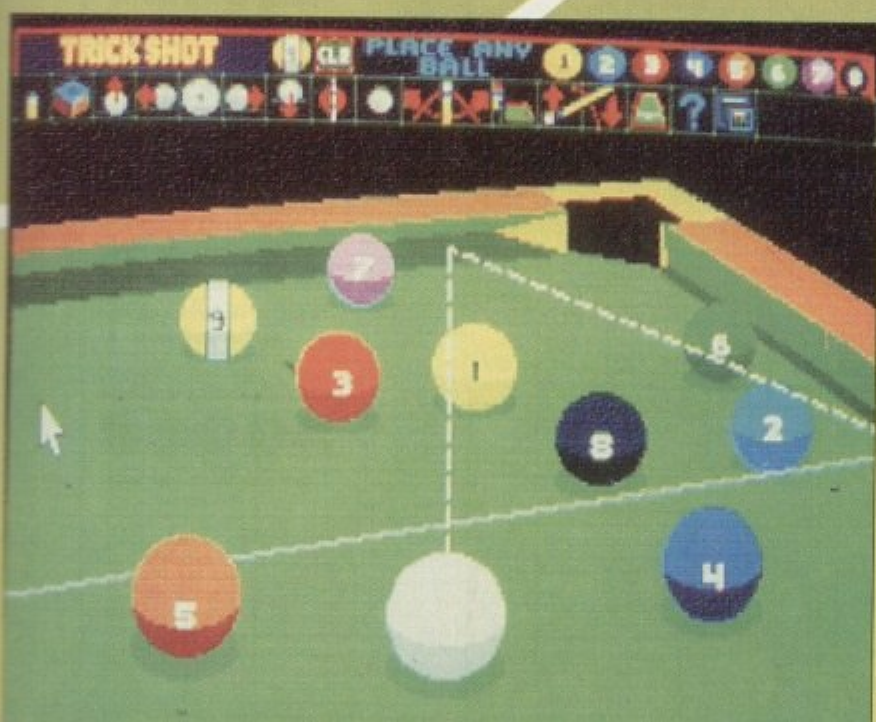
88%

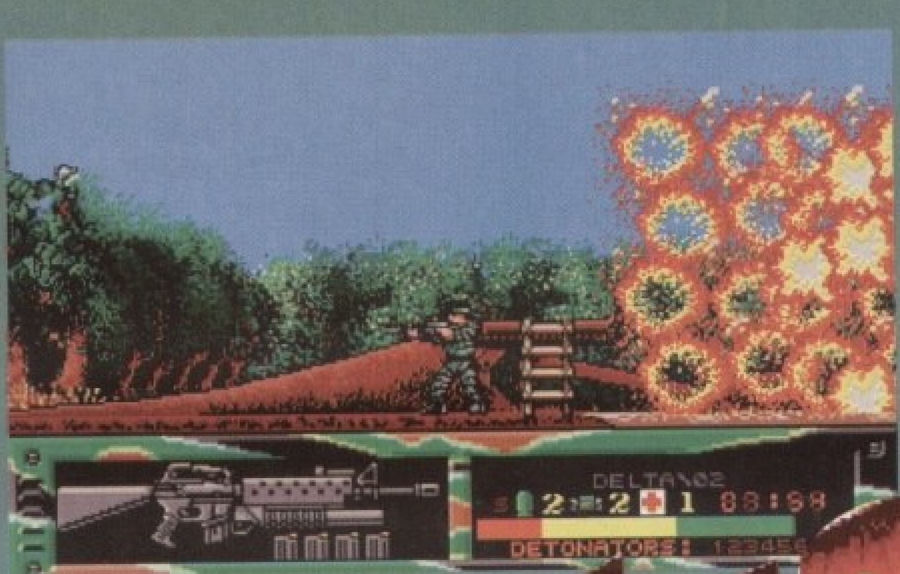


Erm... some balls waiting to be potted



Erm... more balls. Exciting stuff, eh?





Don't try to repeat this at home kids, it's dangerous to play with fireworks

Feel those old 'Nam wounds coming back



ICE • £25.99 • 1/2 meg • Joystick
Out now

Fishface leapt from the helicopter and landed face down in the mud. But that was no ordinary mud. It was the mud of a middle eastern country where Fishface knew he had a mission to complete. He had to go in, kill a guy, and get out alive again. That was his job. For Fishface was a Seal.

His mother had never quite understood, asking him why he wasn't in a circus balancing balls on his nose, but Fishface knew deep down inside that the Seals were the last hope for the civilised world. Or something.

Yes, you too can enter a war zone from the comfort of your own living room, thanks to those terribly obliging people at ICE. In fact, some of you out there may remember that Fireforce was originally developed by Electronic Zoo.

But since their collapse, ICE stepped in and revamped the game before releasing it. If you did remember that, and no cheating now, give yourself two Brownie points.

Boot up your Amiga with Fireforce disk one in the drive, and hey presto! you're off. You can select an existing Seal or name one of your own, a new recruit.

Then you are given several missions to choose from, including assassinating a Middle Eastern officer and destroying a bridge in a tropical war zone.

Equip yourself with a few guns, then tootle off to join the fray. You are deposited by helicopter and left to fend for yourself in a hostile foreign environment, armed only with a machine gun, a handful of grenades and your packed lunch.

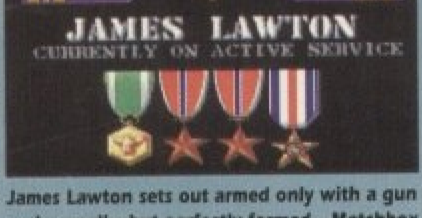
You have a set amount of time to complete the mission and arrive at the predetermined rendezvous point – the far right of the level – if you want to get out alive... otherwise, you'll be listed as Missing in Action.

Each level scrolls horizontally, and you walk right shooting anyone and anything you see. It's all a bit reminiscent of the 8-bit hit Green Beret, but that's no bad thing. It's actually surprisingly good fun, and the graphics and sound complement the action well.

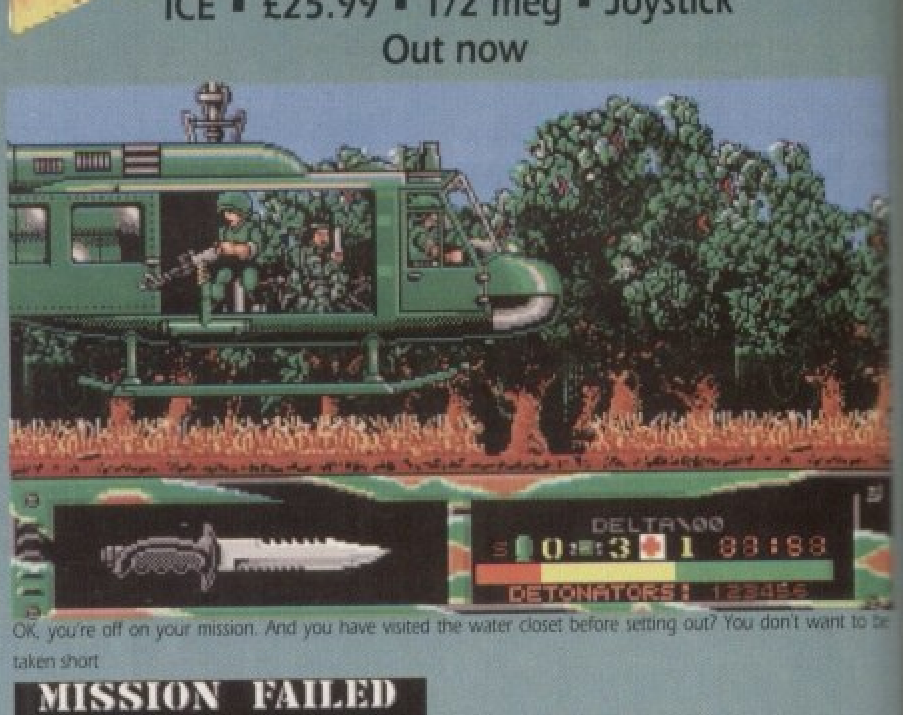
If you complete the mission, you can go on to bigger and better things. If not, then it's a sad screen, a Purple Heart award, and a new character for you, matey.

Fireforce is a refreshing new addiction to the world of wander-and-shoot games, and it's quite a competent program. So if you're the type of individual who likes nothing better than bobbing out and gunning down a few Arabs before breakfast, Fireforce could just be your thing.

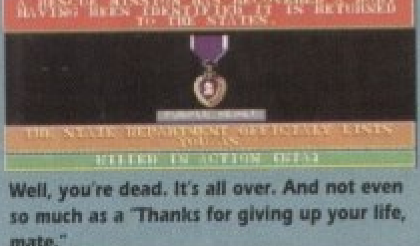

Ooh, you heartless chappy you, shooting a helpless bloke



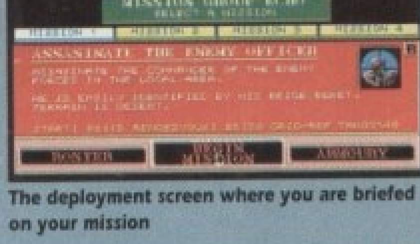
James Lawton sets out armed only with a gun and a small – but perfectly formed – Matchbox model of a 1953 Morris Minor



OK, you're off on your mission. And you have visited the water closet before setting out? You don't want to be taken short



Well, you're dead. It's all over. And not even so much as a "Thanks for giving up your life, mate."



The deployment screen where you are briefed on your mission

VISION

Nicely drawn graphics, although the hero's run is a wee bit weird.

AUDIO

Good gunshots and bangs, but that's it.

PLAYABILITY

A fair old challenge with the multiple missions.

ADDICTION

You'll stick with it a fair while.

82%


You can enter the buildings that you pass

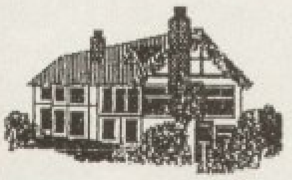
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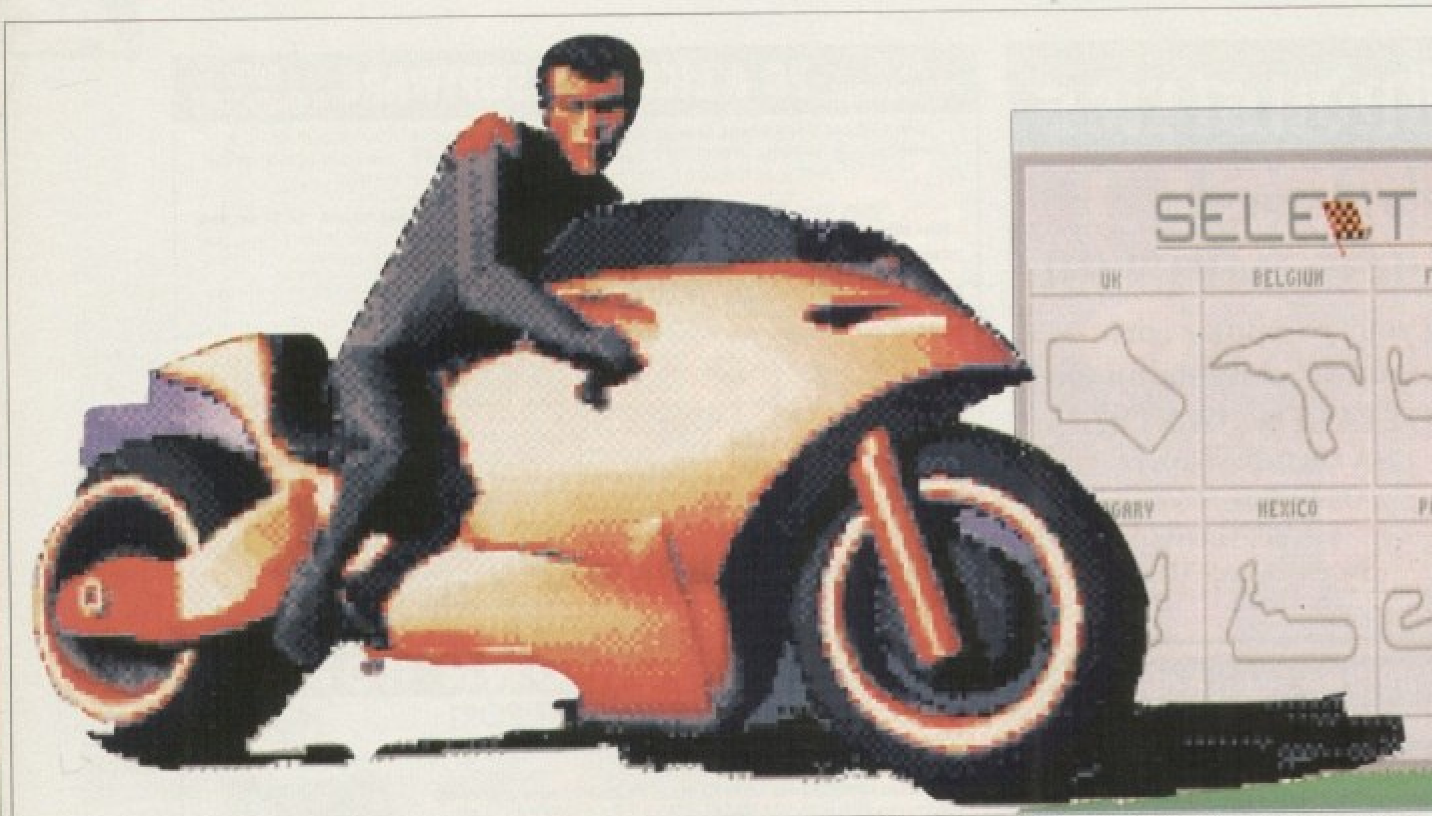
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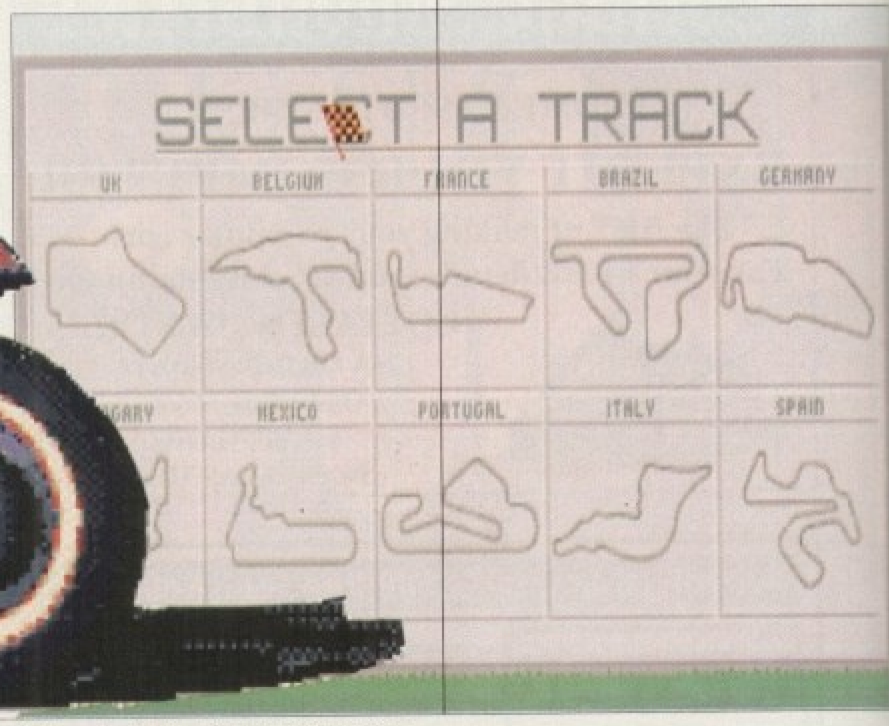
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You wondered where street hawk went.



Welcome to the Crap Sketchers' Association

RED

Yes, it's another environmentally unsound release from the company with the big boxes, Psygnosis. For a two disk game they have enough packaging to house the entire populous of Argentina. But less of my whining and on to the game.

It's a long time since we've seen a motorbike game on the market. All the programmers ran away from them with their rears on fire after the release of Team Suzuki, the game so hard they released a training program showing you how to drive the sodding thing.

The only others before that all looked and played the same, but now comes Red Zone. Read on, children, read on. I like motorbikes, I've even got one myself so this game was going to be a bit of a treat for me.

When you first boot up the game the demp is fantastic. It's some guy on a motorbike driving from the background and skidding to a halt in the foreground. Crap and boring, yes, but very well done.

Once you've battled your way through the demo it's game time and all you kiddies have to shake yourselves from your alcohol-induced haze and think. The program opens up into a icon menu where you can control all the setting for the game – it's quite extensive, really.

Because racing games and simulators in general rely on good screen updates, there can't be much going on on the screen. As a result the programmers usually build in options that allow you to cut down on detail and the overall amount of graphics.

Red Zone allows you to do this and more – there are all sorts you can slip in and take out, such as the backdrops, clouds and the like.

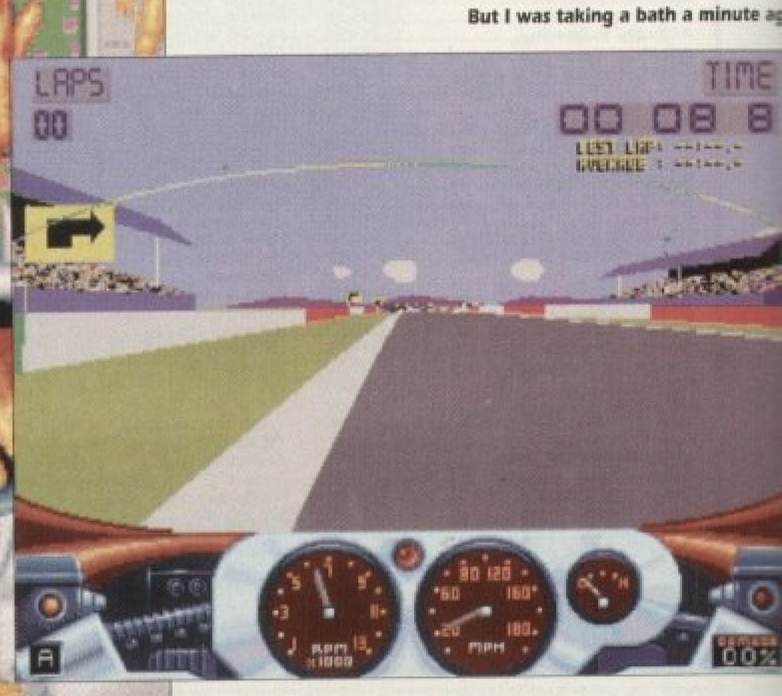
But for those of you out there who are capitalist pigs, who enjoy sucking the life-blood from the heart of the socialist working class (he's talking about accelerated Amiga owners – Ed) there are options for adding more detail to the game, such as trackside buildings and so on.

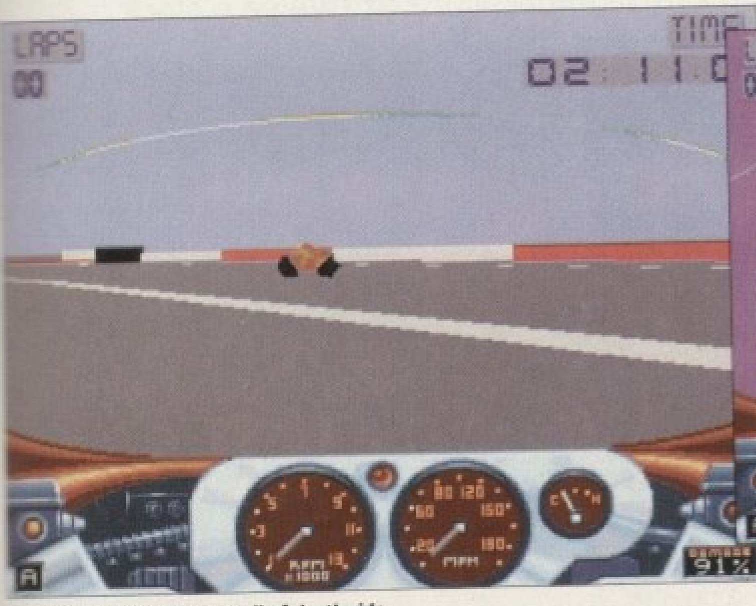
With the details switched on, it looks



Believe it or not

But I was taking a bath a minute ago





The world's first straight wall of death ride



Yes, that is a bike in the background, not a Danish pastry

VISION

Nice but awful updates.

AUDIO

Programmers think that internal combustion engines fart.

PLAYABILITY

Our survey said ERRR ERRRR.

ADDICTION

As addictive as beating yourself about the head.

30%

pretty impressive. It's got all the usually rubbish you see at Donnington – the crowd stands, bridges, Iron Maiden...

I've been avoiding the gameplay for too long, so I'd better let you into a little secret (cursory glance from side to side) – it's crap.

Yep, it's bloody awful. You have to do a qualifying round to get into the race – fine. So here I am, coffee and crisps in front of my trusty Amiga, on the grid with my pulsating sex machine, and my motorbike, the lights go to green and we're off. The feeling you get when trying to drive the machine can only be compared to drinking 15 pints of Special Brew then proceeding to unicycle on the inside of a spin dryer with a bent drum. Very tricky indeedy.

So I thought, that's fair enough I just can't play it very well yet, so off I went, hammering away, and things didn't get any better.

When you do really go for a burton and stuff you bike into one of the walls, sometimes you can't turn around again, or if you can it takes ages and you have to use the cursor keys on the keyboard to flip around.

I actually timed it once – it took over a minute to turn around and get going again. So I eventually persevered and got round the track in about five minutes and it says "You failed to qualify" – I'd never have bloody guessed, Cyril Smith on a tricycle could have done better than that.

Not so Easy Rider

Racing with the other bikes was a bit mickey mouse because the screen updates are so bad you only see them for about two frames before they steam off into the distance, Meanwhile you are trying to turn around after inserting your cranium into the crash barrier.

The rival bikes aren't particularly detailed, which is a bit a let down – they look sort of like the Tron bikes only not as well drawn.

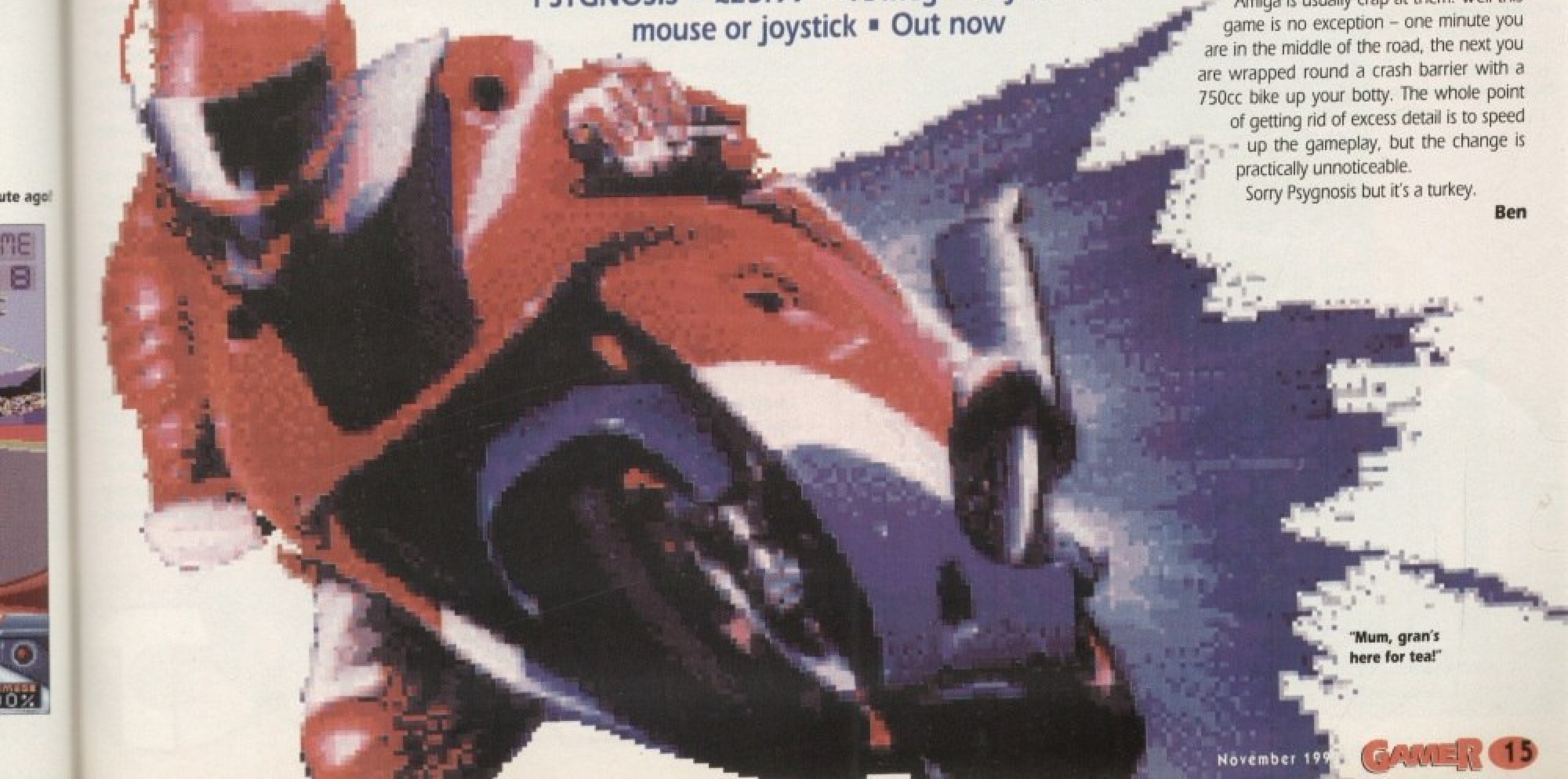
Earlier in this review I was going on about screen updates, and how the Amiga is usually crap at them. Well this game is no exception – one minute you are in the middle of the road, the next you are wrapped round a crash barrier with a 750cc bike up your botty. The whole point of getting rid of excess detail is to speed up the gameplay, but the change is practically unnoticeable.

Sorry Psygnosis but it's a turkey.

Ben

ZONE

PSYGNOSIS • £25.99 • 1/2 meg • Keyboard, mouse or joystick • Out now



"Mum, gran's here for tea!"

VISION

Graphics in F19 are very good for a flight sim.

AUDIO

Pretty pathetic in both games.

PLAYABILITY

Both are easier to get into than most flight sims.

ADDICTION

You can save your pilots for future missions in both games.

80%

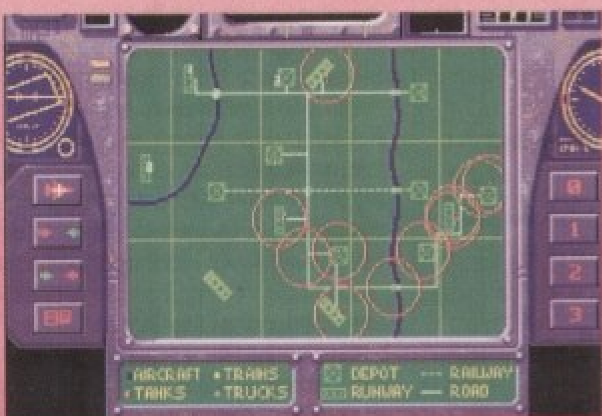
Tom Cruise impressions at twelve o'clock



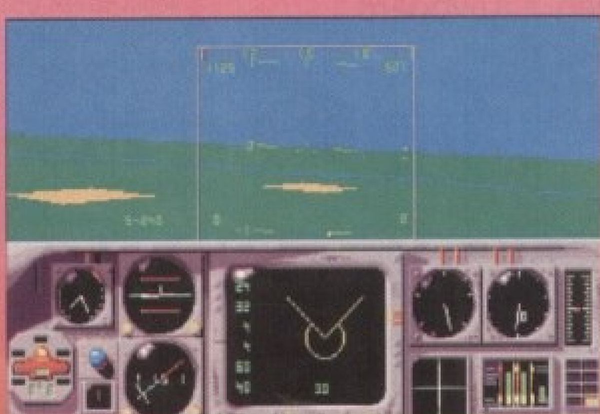
Mig 29M Superfulcrum v F19 Stealth Fighter

DOMARK ▪ £34.99 ▪ 1/2 meg

▪ Keyboard/joystick/mouse ▪ Out now



This is the mission briefing screen in Mig 29M



The main control panel is quite simply laid out, so even if you're completely stupid you can still get the thing off the ground

Someone once said that variety is the spice of life. Domark obviously don't realise this, and have come up with a terrifically varied "double bill" package, featuring, of all things, two flight sims.

Hang on a minute, though. Domark have only ever written Mig 29M and the sequel Mig 29M Superfulcrum, so how can they do a double bill package? By using a Microprose flight sim, that's how.

And so we find F19 Stealth Fighter nestling, somewhat shamefacedly, in a rather large box with Mig 29M Superfulcrum. There are three disks, a couple of manuals and a few poster-type mini-maps included in the package. Mig 29M Superfulcrum is a reasonable but unspectacular flight sim, and the first thing you notice about it are the somewhat bland and boring graphics. There's no attempt at adding depth, and things sort of pop into existence.

You'll be flying along, merrily minding your own business, when suddenly, pop!, a mountain's appeared 300 feet below you. Still, at least it's not jerk city Arizona, with the screen update being smooth enough to pass.

Similar things can be said for the sound, which, during the game, is pretty rare to say the least. Still, never mind. The gameplay is what counts, after all.

The plane handles quite well on mouse control, although I found the joystick system a bit unresponsive. As always with flight sims, there are loads of keyboard controls which you have to use, so you'll find yourself leaning over the keyboard on a regular basis.

There's a comprehensive 50-odd page manual for Superfulcrum, which describes all there is to know about piloting your plane and flying the missions. If you can be bothered to read it, you'll probably find lots of useful stuff in there.

When you figure out how to take off, you'll have a few hours fun trying to destroy the enemy bases while not being shot down. That's a bit of a challenge, since the enemy planes tend to get behind you, and



Your Mig crashed. You're dead. Again. This is becoming a bad habit



Throwing your Mig baby about, or something

HEAD T



before you know what's happening you'll be gazing at a picture of a crashing plane and listening to the harmonica-style "You're dead" music.

Anyway, Superfulcrum's all right, but the main reason most people will take interest in Head to Head is the inclusion of F19 Stealth Fighter. It's vastly superior to its chum, and is far more varied.

You can fly missions in various "theatres" of war ranging from the Middle East (that old favourite) to the former Soviet Union and Eastern Block countries. Your missions sometimes even begin from aircraft carriers.

So, you flick hastily through the slightly slender technical supplement (supplement to what? Our copy didn't appear to have a manual for F19, something that was sorely missed) and eventually manage to get you fighter airborne.

The easiest thing to do then is to press the autopilot, sit back, maybe go and make a cup of tea, invite a friend over for a coffee morning, go to Tescos and do the shopping, get home, make the tea, settle down to a quiet evening with your family, and then maybe the next morning, go and check on the computer.

By then you might have reached your target, particularly if you put it into the not-desperately-fast accelerated time mode. When you get near your target, you knock off the autopilot, swoop around a bit, and occasionally try to launch a missile or something at your foe.

Actually, I have to admit to being completely hopeless at this stage, spending hours looping happily around trying to fire at that damned enemy missile boat. I didn't realise at the time that I was only supposed to photograph it. The graphics are vastly superior to those in Superfulcrum, being not only more colourful, but also portraying depth. And somehow F19 still moves faster than its chum.

It's the same old story with the sound though. It surely wouldn't be hard to add a couple of extra effects. There's lots of depth to both games, especially the latter. Neither are too complicated, and so you won't get too bogged down in technical details like: "Hey, air control. I've got a turkey at five o'clock. I want to launch an SRM44/93RM with all haste.

"I've engaged manual override and turned on the auto-search-system, but I can't for the life of me figure out how I invert the polarities on the anti-static transmitter coil of the programmable thrust system.

"Do I switch to tracking mode, or should I lock on to my target with the built-in HUD projection system?"

For your money you get a good sim and an OK sim. In fact, if you've not got a decent flight sim in your collection, I suppose you could do a lot worse than take a look at this.

Dave

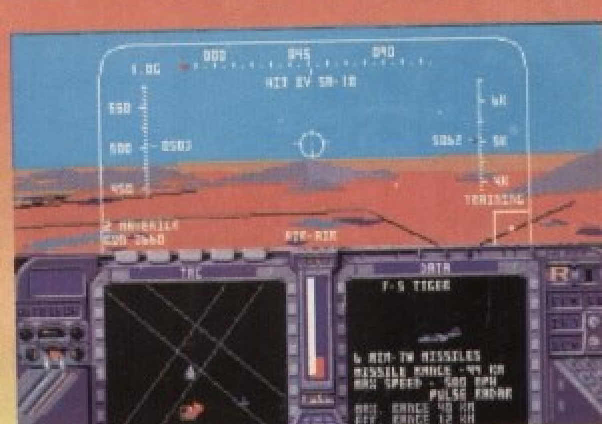

There's nothing like shooting your stealthy chums as they try to take off from the aircraft carrier


Some of the F19 missions involve flying around Gulfs and destroying any ships unlucky enough to be owned by the enemy


If you manage to eject before your F19 goes down, you'll be rescued by a friendly 'copter

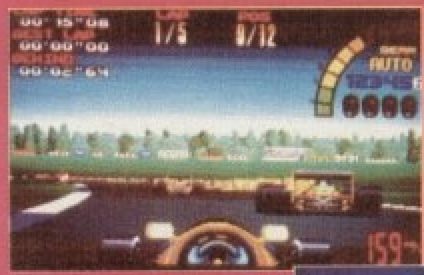

Many of the Stealth Fighter missions take place at night. It's a shame really, because when it's dark you can't see the nice graphics


There are oodles of views in both games, this one being from F19


The graphics are more detailed in F19 than those in Mig29

TO HEAD

the source 1





We love you, Nigel

One thing that the English seem to be vaguely good at is motor racing. This year old Mansell won the World Championships – about time too is all I can say.

To commemorate this momentous occasion, Gremlin are about to release the game of Nigel Mansell, and would you believe it, it's a driving game. Now there's a surprise, eh?

It's an actual racetrack game, which is something we haven't seen in a while. It's all racing through deserts and the like nowadays, but I still remember Pole Position – no-one else does.

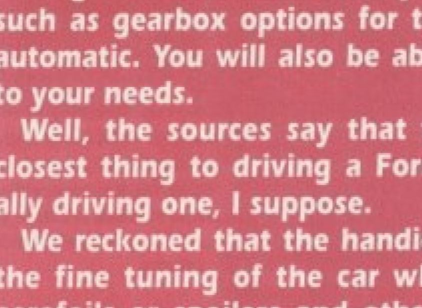
Since the release of the motorbike driving game Team Suzuki, which was deemed the most ridiculously impossible game in the world, people have started putting trainers in their programs.

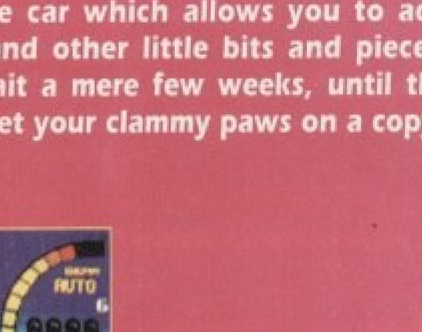
This is the first fully functional one that I've come across. It has a sort of advice service that takes you around the various tracks – handy, huh?

It's got all the usual stuff you see on racing games such as gearbox options for the girlies who want an automatic. You will also be able to tune the car more to your needs.

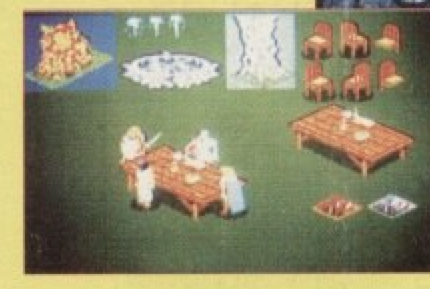
Well, the sources say that this is going to be the closest thing to driving a Formula One car, bar actually driving one, I suppose.

We reckoned that the handiest bit of the game was the fine tuning of the car which allows you to add aerofoils or spoilers and other little bits and pieces. And you'll have to wait a mere few weeks, until the end of November, to get your clammy paws on a copy.









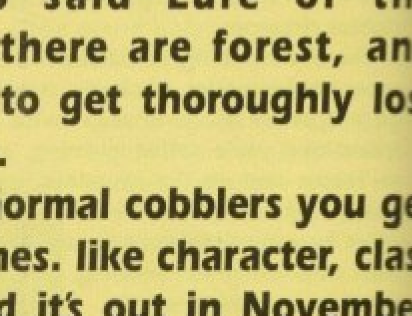
A beastie's back door

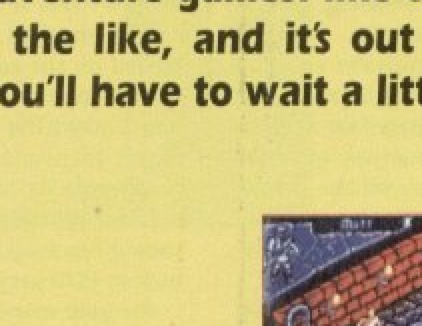
Hero Quest II is another vastly humongous adventure game from those lovely Gremlin people. The follow up to, wait for it, Hero Quest, this is bigger than a very big thing. Comprising ten different scenarios, it should keep the adventure gamey people happy for a long while.

The nicest part were the interactive characters, who have the ultimate aim of either distracting you or helping you in your quest.

Unlike some of the recent adventure games, you are not just confined to a dungeon (who said Lure of the Temptress?) as there are forest, and things like that to get thoroughly lost and frustrated in.

There's all the normal cobblers you get in adventure games. like character, class and the like, and it's out in November, so you'll have to wait a little bit longer.





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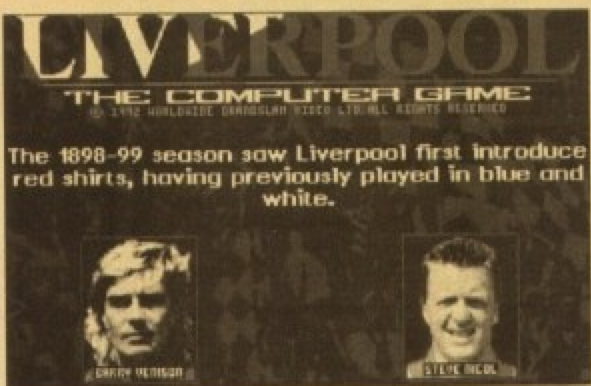
B20

Successful football club in bad game scandal

LIVERPOOL FC: The Computer Game



GRANDSLAM • £25.99 • 1/2 meg • Joystick • Out now



Fascinating facts about the origins of Liverpool FC. You learn something new every day



The game in progress. Oh, come on, you try to think of an amusing caption for a game this bland

Arguably one of the most successful teams of all time have made it to your Amiga courtesy of Grandslam. Liverpool FC: The Computer Game stars all the Anfield blokes in a soccer game that Grandslam think will rival the success of Kick Off 2.

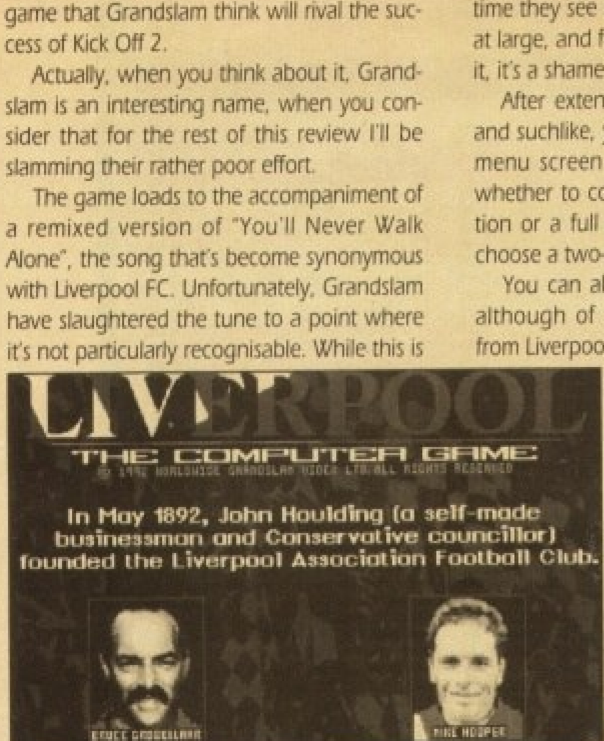
Actually, when you think about it, Grandslam is an interesting name, when you consider that for the rest of this review I'll be slamming their rather poor effort.

The game loads to the accompaniment of a remixed version of "You'll Never Walk Alone", the song that's become synonymous with Liverpool FC. Unfortunately, Grandslam have slaughtered the tune to a point where it's not particularly recognisable. While this is playing in the background, you're treated – or should that be subjected – to a brief(ish) history of the club, with little digitised pictures of all the current players underneath.

Liverpool fans should like this bit the first time they see it, but for the rest of the world at large, and for people who've already seen it, it's a shame you can't skip it.

After extensive intro pictures of FA Cups and suchlike, you eventually get to the main menu screen. From here you can choose whether to compete in an FA Cup competition or a full League Season, and you can choose a two-player FA Cup final.

You can also change your squad about, although of course you can only choose from Liverpool players.



So it's the Conservative party we've got to thank for Liverpool FC: The Computer Game

When you've twiddled around with the options you can start a practice session or play a proper match. Practice is definitely recommended, since the control system takes a bit of getting used to.

The pitch is viewed from an angle not unlike Rage's Striker, with one player heading up and "into" the screen, and the other coming down and "out of" it. The player currently selected is marked by a four pulsing arrows around his feet, and you move him around with your joystick.

The fire button kicks the ball, although not as in KO2. There's no way to control how hard you'll hit the ball, the player just belts it as far as he can.

This means you'll find yourself running up the pitch with the ball at your feet (it's a sticky-feet control method) and shooting, because stringing together several passes is completely impossible. It's a very awkward passing system – so impractical that you'll give up trying.

The computer teams are quite good, and you'll find that before long they've scored against you. When the ball crosses the line, the view instantly flicks back to the centre circle before you know what's happened, and it's a bit confusing to say the least.

The graphics look OK when the game is paused, but as soon as you see it in action you'll reconsider. There are precious few frames of animation for the players and the game really looks a bit tacky.

The ball responds so completely unrealistically that you'll laugh... it shoots along at 200mph and then stops almost instantly. It's as if the pitch is covered in honey or something.

So what is there that's good about Liverpool FC: The Computer Game? Erm, it's endorsed by Liverpool FC, which will mean it's bound to sell a fair few no matter how bad it is. And the presentation screens look all right.

But that's about it, I'm afraid. From the moment you start playing and think "This is all right" to the moment a few minutes later when you think "Blimey, this game's been bunged together in a few weeks to cash in on a good licence, when in fact it's complete tripe," it's all gradually downhill.

The simple fact is, that no matter who you support, you have to admit that Liverpool are quite a good team. And the other simple fact is that even if you support Liverpool, you'd have to have a bit of a mental disorder to fork out for this.

VISION

Moves quite fast, but rather rubbish animation.

AUDIO

OK music but feeble crowd sounds.

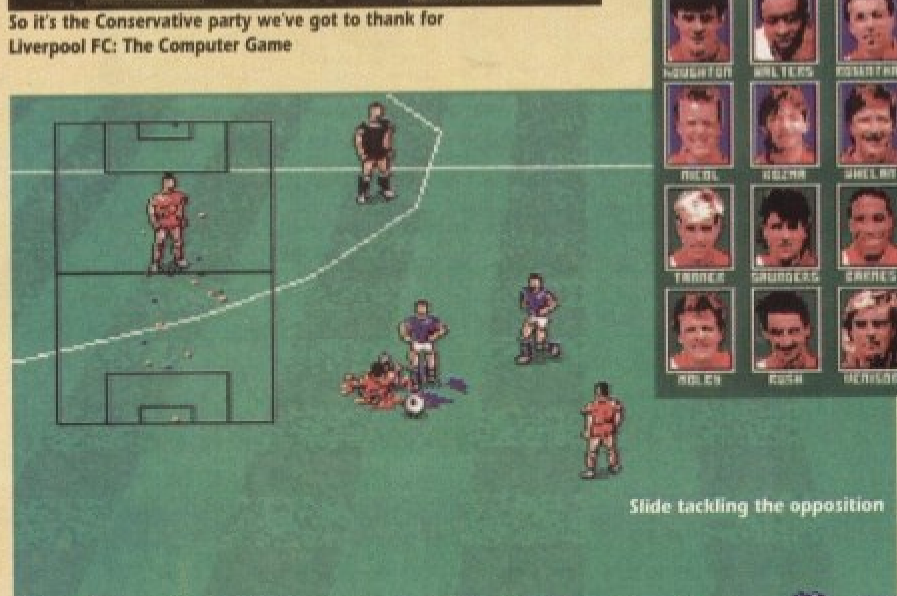
PLAYABILITY

If you persevere you may just keep on playing.

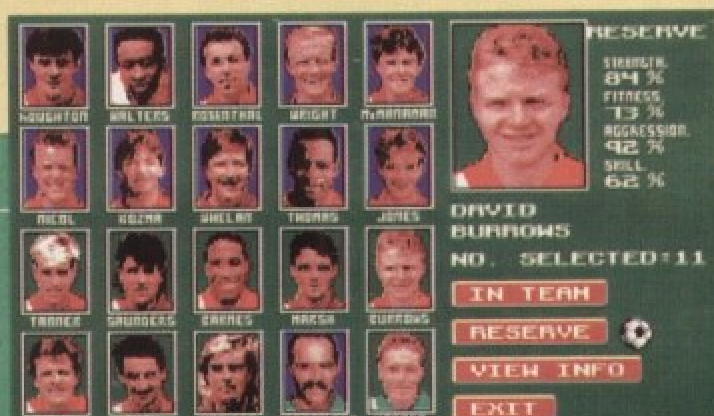
ADDICTION

The league mode has some lasting appeal.

70%



Slide tackling the opposition



Choosing your team from the stunning array of players available



The main menu. From here you, er, click on things

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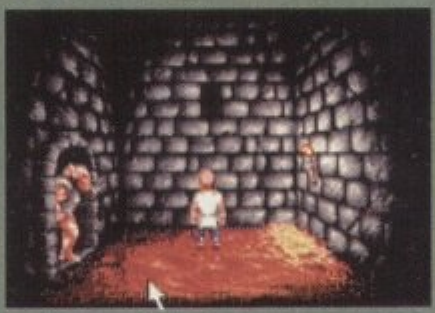
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cheat mode

Getting to grips with the Temptress

Another ripping Gamer guide

You lucky people! This month we, the lovely lovey people at Gamer, and a certain gentleman, bring you Lure of the Temptress – the Solution. This time it's personal, with wings. So if you were as baffled as we were playing it you may sit down and complete the blasted thing with no effort at all, you spineless workshy fops.



CELL

Pull the torch. Walk forward as far as possible. When the skorl passes you to look at the fire, walk out of the cell, and close and lock the door.

OUTER CELL

Look at the prisoner. Go to the guard room. Look at barrel. Look at the tap on the side of the barrel. Get the knife on the barrel. Get the bottle.

Use the bottle on the tap. Use the knife on the sack. Look at the sack. Go to the torture room. Use the knife on the leather cord on the rack. Go to outer cell.

Give the bottle to the prisoner. Look at the bricks on the eastern wall. Tell Ratpouch to push the bricks. Walk through the opening in the wall.

SEWERAGE

Find the man called Mallin (hint: he usually hangs out in the alleys, the sewerage or the weregate). Talk to Mallin. Accept his offer. Go to the village shop. Talk to the shopkeeper (Ewan).

Give Ewan the metal bar. Find the blacksmith (Luthern). Talk to Luthern twice. If you are in the Blacksmith's workshop then get the tinderbox on the floor in the foreground. If you're not there, go there now.

Go to the Magpie Inn. Talk to the barmaid (Nellie). Give her the gem. Talk to the man at the table (Morkus). Bribe him then talk to him. Then go to the blacksmith's and talk to Luthern. Give him the flask.

Go to the Magpie courtyard. Talk to the man sitting in the middle (Grub) about the black goat. Go to the Severed Arms (hint: do not drink there. The beer has been watered down). Talk to the woman knitting. Talk to her about Taidgh. Examine the diary she gives you.

Go to the marketplace. Give the lockpick you got from Grub to Ratpouch. Look at the door of Taidgh's house. Look at the lock on the door. When the skorl (Wayne) comes to look at the door, tell Ratpouch to use the lockpick on the lock and open the door.

Go into Taidgh's house (hint: save the game at this point). Look at the apparatus. Look at the tap on the right of the apparatus. Look at the oil burner, below and left of the apparatus.

Use the tinderbox on the oil burner. When the reaction has finished, use the flask on the tap. Drink from the flask. You should now be disguised as Selena.

Go to Middle Street. Talk to Uruka (the skorl guarding the Town Hall door). Open the door. Go inside the town hall. Talk to any skorl inside the town hall. Then go and find Wayne and talk to him.

Go to the Magpie tavern. Talk to Morkus. Go to the Apothecary workshop. Talk to Goewin (if she is not there or the door is locked, then wait until she arrives).

Find Ratpouch and talk to him. Go to the Apothecary workshop. Talk to Goewin twice. Go to Blackfriar's Row. Look at the poster.

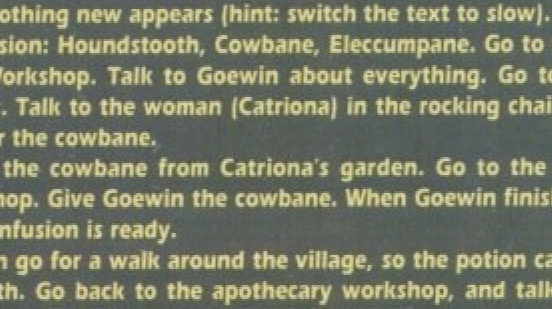
Find Mallin. Talk to Mallin (accept the book). Go to the Monk's Lodge. Give the book to the monks. Talk to the Monks several times until nothing new appears (hint: switch the text to slow).

Infusion: Houndstooth, Cowbane, Eleccumpane. Go to the Apothecary Workshop. Talk to Goewin about everything. Go to the Blacksmith's. Talk to the woman (Catriona) in the rocking chair. Ask Catriona for the cowbane.

Get the cowbane from Catriona's garden. Go to the apothecary workshop. Give Goewin the cowbane. When Goewin finishes, ask her if the infusion is ready.

Then go for a walk around the village, so the potion can reach full strength. Go back to the apothecary workshop, and talk to Goewin about the spell and the weregate.

Go to the Severed Arms. Talk to the barbarian (Ultar) twice. Go to the weregate. Talk to the statues. Find Goewin and talk to her. Go to the weregate again and talk to her again. Walk through the weregate doors to the entrance cave.



THE CAVES

Look at the skulls. Look at the right skull. Go to the green cave and wait for Goewin. Look at the skulls in the green cave. Tell Goewin to go to the entrance cave and pull the left skull. Go to the blue cave.

Look at the skulls. Pull the right skull, and wait a couple of minutes for Goewin to enter the green cave. Pull the left skull to let her into the blue cave. Tell her to go to the green cave and pull the right skull. Go to black cave (hint: save the game here).

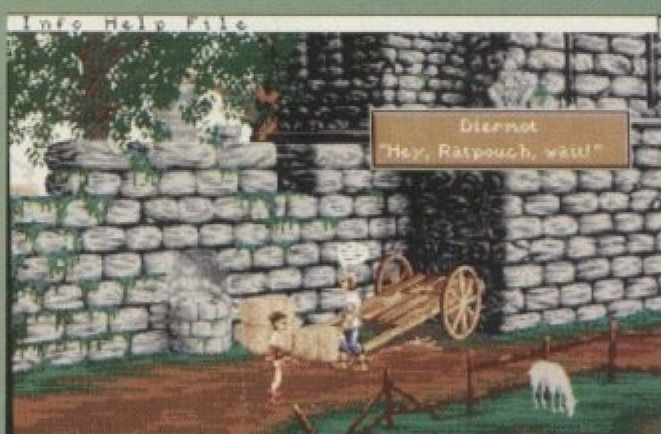
Go to the cave with the monster in. To defeat the monster, hold the left mouse button down. Move the mouse left to advance and right onto Diermot to attack. Repeat until the monster dies. If you get hit it is better to retreat rather than defend.

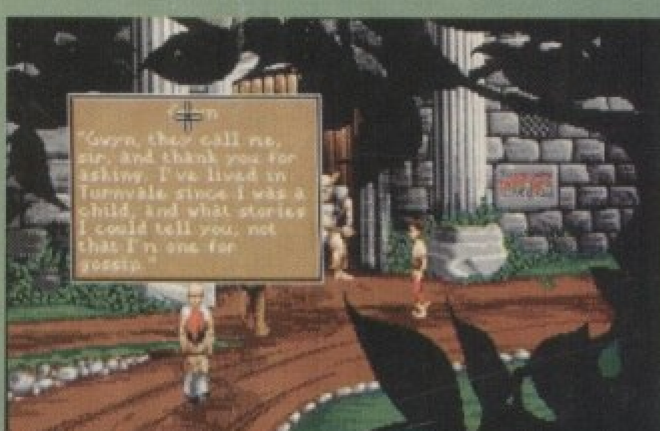
Go to the Dragon cave. Use the potion on the dragon. Talk to the dragon. Say to the dragon: "I command you to help us." Go to the blue cave. Pull the left skull. Go to the green cave. Make sure Goewin is always with you.

Pull the left skull. The weregate doors should now be open. Go to the marketplace. Wait for the skorl (Wayne) to go into Ewan's shop. Look through the shop window. When Wayne leaves the shop, talk to him. Then go into Ewan's shop. Talk to Ewan, then walk out of the shop.









DRAWBRIDGE

Here you will have to fight and kill another monster. Then walk through the door to the left of the drawbridge to defeat the evil temptress Selena.

WINE CELLAR

Look at the three casks in the foreground on the left. Look at the bung on the top cask. Go to the kitchen. Look at the carcass on the table. Look at the fat on the carcass. Get the fat. Get the tongs by the table. Go to the wine cellar.

When the boy is in the wine cellar, talk to him and tell him that you've come for Selena. Talk to Minnow again, and tell him to tell the skorl that someone is in the cellar.

Pull the bung out with the tongs, then hide behind the right pillar in the background. When the skorl walks past, go to the gateroom. Look at the lever.

Find Minnow again to make him follow you to the gateroom, if he is not there already. Tell Minnow to pull the lever. At the same time you must operate the winch. The winch should turn.

Go up the stairs to the second floor at the dining room (hint: save the game here). Then go through the door on the left.







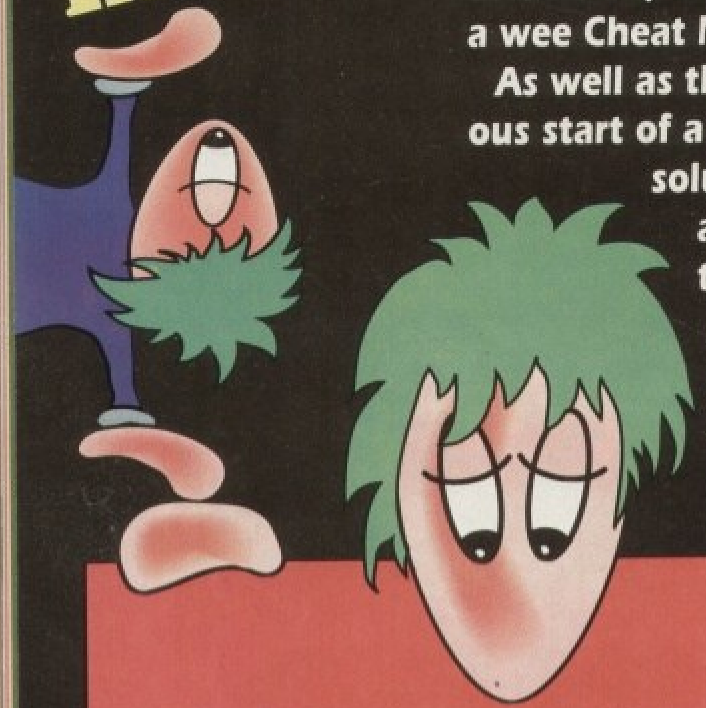


Cheat Mode EXTRA

Judging by your response to our Gamer survey a few months ago, you think Cheat Mode really is the camel's cobblers. And so, ever receptive to your comments, we've given you a wee Cheat Mode bonus.

As well as the over-generous start of a Gobliiins solution, here're a few other titbits from you game busters out in Readerland



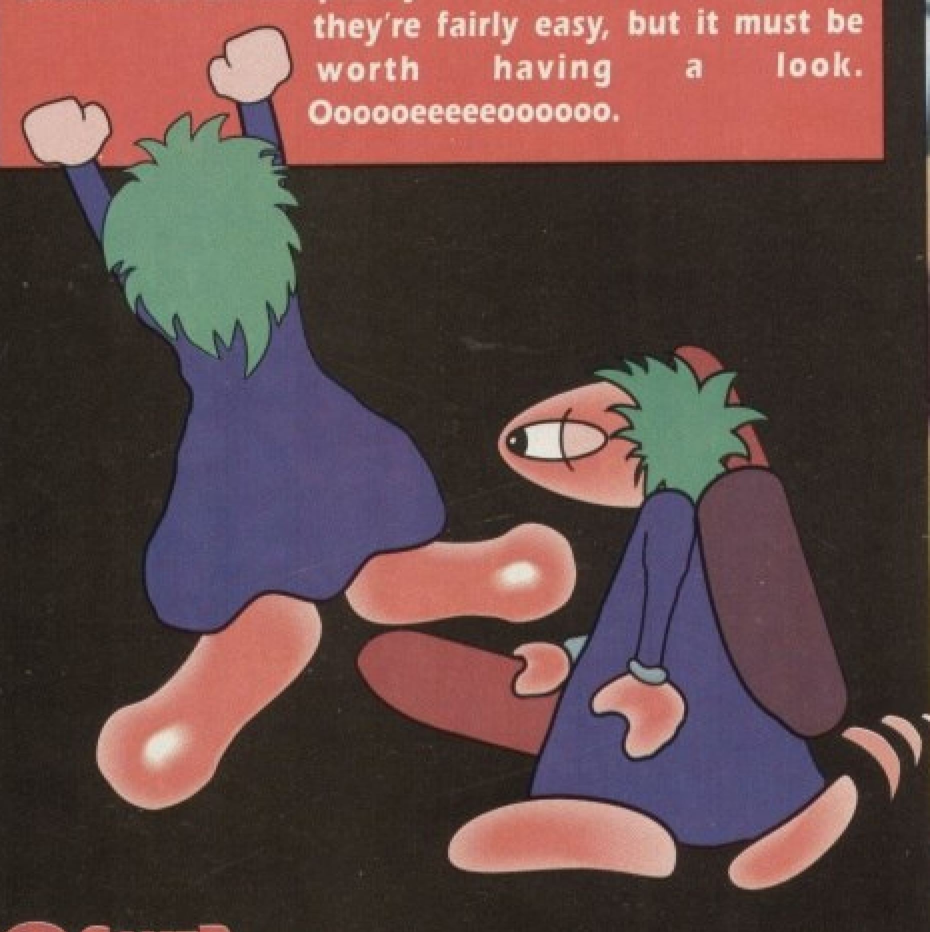


Very spooky indeed...

Very, very spooky actually. James Crompton of Oxon claims to have found some extra levels on Lemmings. It all sounds a bit strange to us, but give it a go. What have you got to lose? Here's what you do...

Type in "LEMNGFINAL" as the password, then enter "IAMNOTGOOD". Now you can skip levels with the spacebar. Skip the last level, and the 30 identical levels that follow it. They're rated "blue" apparently.

Then skip the ten "playerh"-rated levels and you should find 20 completely new levels. James says that they're fairly easy, but it must be worth having a look. Oooooeeeeeoooooo.

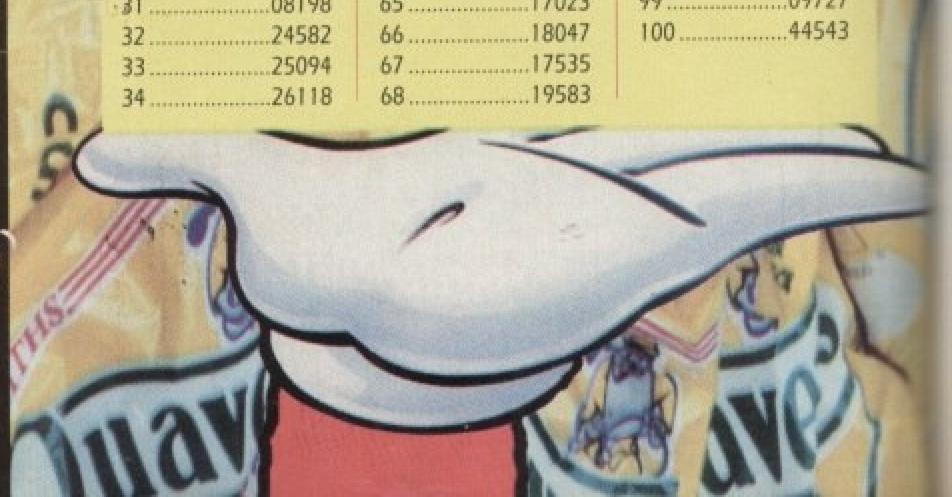


Startlingly crispy

Are you having trouble getting to the later levels of Ocean's cheesy snack-related puzzle game, Pushover? Well, we don't blame you. It is a bit tricky, isn't it?

One person who didn't have any problems is Paul Chapman from Hartlepool. He's sent us the level codes for the first 100 levels. And being generally nice people, here they are. Just for you. Because you're special. Yes you are.

Level	Code	Level	Code	Level	Code
1	00512	35	25606	69	20095
2	01536	36	27654	70	19071
3	01024	37	28166	71	18559
4	03072	38	27142	72	22655
5	03584	39	26630	73	23167
6	02560	40	30726	74	24191
7	02048	41	31238	75	23679
8	06144	42	32262	76	21631
9	06656	43	31750	77	22143
10	07680	44	29702	78	21247
11	07168	45	30214	79	20735
12	05122	46	29190	80	28927
13	05634	47	28678	81	29439
14	04610	48	20486	82	30463
15	04098	49	20998	83	29951
16	12290	50	22022	84	31999
17	12802	51	21510	85	32511
18	13826	52	23558	86	31487
19	13314	53	24070	87	30975
20	15362	54	23046	88	26879
21	15878	55	22534	89	27647
22	14854	56	18438	90	28671
23	14342	57	18950	91	28159
24	10246	58	19974	92	26111
25	10758	59	19462	93	26623
26	11782	60	17414	94	25599
27	11270	61	17982	95	25087
28	09222	62	16958	96	08703
29	09734	63	16510	97	09215
30	08710	64	16511	98	10239
31	08198	65	17023	99	09727
32	24582	66	18047	100	44543
33	25094	67	17535		
34	26118	68	19583		



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Magnum fans strike back

TREASURES OF THE SAVAGE FRONTIER

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Why! Why do they do it? Why does everybody who creates fantasy art, especially material for Dungeons and Dragons, always draw half-naked women with there breasts heaving over the top of their bras? I pick up the box of this game and what do I see? A picture of a half-naked women with heaving breasts.

In the early 70s, when people's clothes started to get really silly and the drugs started to get more ridiculous, two hippies came up with the concept of Dungeons and Dragons. Thus the board game equivalent of the Anorak was born.

Basically D+D comes down to rolling lots of funny shaped dice and having a really stupid name like Aaron the Warlock, so you haven't missed anything is you haven't played it.

Now D+D has come to the Amiga – wahey kids – and it's breeding and multiplying, but don't worry – it isn't that bad. The game has been planned quite well, but nothing new has been explored.

Graphically it's now't to shout about – it's all very functional until you interact with other characters. The other characters you talk to in the game are well detailed but sadly inanimate. The way you control your characters is very similar to most of the adventure games of this ilk. Basically you move them with the mouse, clicking the character first then the area you want to move to. Boring, but it works.



When you first begin adventuring, the method in which you explore thing is a bit confusing – you have to click on the various icons to search, look and so on but again it is completely unanimated.

There is quite a subtle twist to this game. You don't play a complete dribbling idiot who takes on hordes of blood thirsty psychos, you play several dribbling idiots – what fun.

To determine your characters' various faculties you have to do all the rolling of the dice that you would normally do before a game of D+D.

You need to roll for Dexterity, Skill and all that sort of cobblers, but the programmers have kindly made it a quick roll option which re-rolls all of the values for your various skills at the same time so you don't have to do them individually. When choosing your character you have to create the disposition of the character as well as the physical statistics.

So if you're a Black Sabbath fan, you can create a character who is an evil, godless, lawless goblin with a large baseball bat to whop unsuspecting grannies over the head with.

The whole point of this exercise is to save the Savage frontier from Cataclysmic war (ho hum), free Llorkh from its evil captors (snore), and regain a powerful magical item that has been lost for thousands of years – and still be home for tea.

The whole series is set over a large area, and this one is also set in its own world, a pretty immense creation that makes Elite's six galaxies with 1,000 planets in each look a bit small.

Well, it's a definite must if you play dungeon and dragons but haven't got a load of other people to play with, but your average adventure game buff could do a lot better.

Ben

VISION

Dodgy and boring – need I say more?

AUDIO

Exqueeze me? baking powder.

PLAYABILITY

Probably very playable if you're into this sort of thing.

ADDICTION

A lot of scope for D & D fans.

60%





Sidney, there's a strange man weeing in our garden



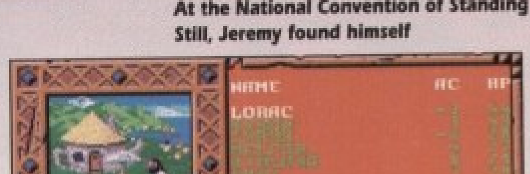
Enough about me baby, what do you do?



At the National Convention of Standing Still, Jeremy found himself



I'm buggered now, her dad's turned up



No one, but no one lives in a big teapot

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amiga almanac

Support for

Alex Gian continues his look at ARexx programming with a guide around the rexxsupport library

Last time we started looking at ARexx, not only as a macro or command language, but also as a full programming language in its own right. We saw that the minimum requirement for a system-specific programming language is the ability to manipulate blocks of memory corresponding to the system structures.

It must be able to read the contents of specified structures, and to pass them as arguments (parameters) to functions which can do something useful with them.

Further, the language must be able to reserve blocks of memory and write to them when it creates new structures in its own programs.

We have already seen the built-in ARexx instructions for manipulating memory (IMPORT, EXPORT and so on), and we have mentioned that other ARexx support libraries also allow this ability.

This time we will look at some of the functions of a special ARexx library called rexxsupport.library which is supplied as part of ARexx, and which you will find in the Workbench 2.0 libs/drawer.

In addition to the memory manipulation functions (and some other useful utility functions), this library allows you to create custom ARexx ports in your own programs.

Using this feature you are no longer limited merely to sending messages to other ARexx-compatible programs – you can create programs that receive ARexx messages too.

Mixture

This mixture of abilities – interprocess messages, memory addressing, AmigaDOS interaction, as well as the regular ARexx parsing and command instructions – is what make the ARexx programming environment so powerful. Over the next few columns we are going to write an ARexx program that will use and illustrate all of them.

Our program will be a "Preferences" controller which runs in the background and allows you to change any of the standard settings by sending ARexx commands to them. That is, you will not have to load up your Preferences program and make the selection manually. You will be able to send a message to it from your Shell, or from another ARexx program. This could be useful, for example, if you are doing a batch of printing and want to change the printer settings for each individual print!

Our program will also allow control of other printer features, not accessible from Preferences, like pitch, size, style, quality and so on.

We will also write a simple program to control our main program from an Intuition interface, instantly making any changes we want at the click of a mouse.

These programs will illustrate the basic principles, and encourage you to implement ideas of your own. The main intent is to show how ARexx can be used to write useful programs quickly and efficiently in the standard Amiga environment.

Obviously this cannot be a tutorial on general programming, but it will be kept simple, and anyone with a bit of programming know-how and the willingness to experiment should have no trouble following it.

The full listings will appear on the CoverDisk from the next issue, with the tricky bits explained in this section.

Handling funtions

Before we can use the functions for creating our own ARexx ports, it is useful to have some idea of how they are handled by the Amiga's operating system. Ports – and all multitasking activity – are handled by the part of the operating system called the Exec.

The Exec is the most important part of the Amiga's operating system. In the simplest terms it can be thought of as a very fast loop that allocates the central processor's time between all the different tasks that are running.

The Exec also manages the Amiga's memory pool, allocating and freeing blocks of memory according to need, and controls all the low level signals.

Now the Exec library provides a function called Wait() which, when called by any program, puts that program "to sleep". The program is still operative, but draws only a minimal amount of the system resources.

When the program receives some special signal it "wakes up" and carries on doing whatever task it is meant to be doing – an ARexx message can be one of these special signals. This signalling system is the heart of the Amiga's multitasking efficiency.

The rexxsupport.library allows the user set up ports and receive ARexx messages without get-

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r Rexx trekkers

Interprocess communication

In this section we will be looking at various ARexx-compatible programs and how their interfaces enhance their overall performance.

If you would like to see the ARexx interface of a particular program featured in these pages, please let us know. We kick off with a look at Hyperbook.

Hyperbook is a package that allows the user to present information, text and graphics in a sensibly interconnected manner. It allows for the easy creation of buttons, requesters etc, which perform actions when clicked.

In this way it is an extension of the hypertext idea, where you click on a highlighted word and get a lot more information on it.

Any object that can be displayed with Hyperbook, including pictures and graphics, can be activated to lead on to further information.

Hyperbook is quite popular because of its extreme ease of use, and its price (about £40 if you shop around). It has been used to write educational software, and quite a few disk magazines.

It can be used successfully as a presentation package without its ARexx interface. However, if it is used with ARexx, its power is multiplied many times.

Firstly, whole sequences of actions (in the form of ARexx scripts) can be programmed, rather than just simple one-step instructions. Secondly, ARexx can be used for calculating purposes where necessary.

Finally, most of the effects that can be created in Hyperbook by using the mouse have corresponding ARexx functions. Unfortunately, the graphics primitives and the text colour are not yet under ARexx control.

ARexx provides Hyperbook with a scripting language which it would not otherwise have. The converse of this is that Hyperbook can become a graphical front end for ARexx.

This goes quite a way beyond the requirements of a presentation package – in fact, Hyperbook becomes a simple design prototyping environment. Here is an example – you could use ARexx to read in the contents of a directory, and sort it by size.

This could be presented on the screen as a bar graph. You could use the parsing abilities of ARexx to determine the type of each file (Ascii, executable, IFF pic or sound file etc).

Clicking on the image of each file could then have some suitable result. Pictures and text files could be displayed, and sound files could be sent to a sound-player in the background (Hyperbook does not have built-in support for sound).

Using features like these, even a programmer with moderate experience can design very attractive and practical programs in a short period of time.

Finally, I should mention that Hyperbook appears to have a few minor bugs under Workbench 2.0. They are not serious, but the program will occasionally crash if you press the "wrong" button.

This could upset a novice user, but I hope that we will see an even better release of Hyperbook in the near future.

ting involved in the intricacies of Exec. Another example of port use are the IDCMP ports (Intuition Direct Communication Message Ports) used by the system to communicate things like mouse-clicks, gadget selections and keyboard input.

We mention them here because many ARexx libraries that support Intuition convert IDCMP messages into ARexx strings so that they can be handled more easily.

The following is the procedure for using an Amiga port. In general, it holds for all ports, not just ARexx ones, so if you plan to do any serious Amiga programming you will come across it often.

1. Open a port
2. DO Loop start
3. Wait for a message
4. Receive a message
5. Check the message
6. Copy the message
7. Reply to message
8. Act on message
9. DO Loop end
10. Close port

First of all we must have an open port for our messages – we then enter a loop where the program "sleeps" until a message arrives at the port.

If more than one messages arrive, they will be queued, and processed successively. We then check that the message is relevant to us. If the message is relevant, we copy it to a variable, and "reply" to it. This part is very important. We have to reply to the message as soon as possible – even before we have actually processed it – in order to free up the resources of the Exec, which will be waiting for a reply.

If we do not reply to the message, we set up what is known as a "busy-waiting" loop. This is one of the worst mistakes you can make – the operating system will suspend all multitasking until a reply to the message is received!

You should also note that once you have replied to a message, it is lost, and that is why we copy it to a variable.

After we have replied to the message we can process its contents and take whatever action is relevant. We then go back to the start of the loop and wait for any other messages.

The example below shows how these principles are applied specifically to ARexx. There are a couple of things to note:

1. The function GETPKT() returns the message packet waiting at the port, or a four-byte NULL value if there is no packet. In the second case the next line just goes back to the beginning of the loop. This is a necessary test, but we won't go into the details of why.

2. Messages arriving at an ARexx port arrive in the form of an ARexx packet, which contains the ARexx message plus some extra information.

The function GETARG() retrieves the actual message from the packet. It also has more advanced uses for extracting multiple arguments from functions, but these will not concern us here either.

3. The REPLY() function has two arguments. The second one is the return code. If nothing untoward has happened, it is set to 0. If some error had occurred, it could have been set to something else. All the rest is pretty straightforward:

```
/* simpleport.rexx */
CALL openport(MYPORT)
DO FOREVER
   CALL waitpkt(MYPORT)
   packet = getpkt(MYPORT)
   IF packet = '00000000'x THEN ITERATE
   message = getarg( packet )
   call reply(packet,0)
   /* act on message: */
   SELECT
   WHEN message = 'GREET' THEN SAY 'Hi There!'
   WHEN message = 'MOAN'  THEN SAY 'Boy, what a
day...'
   WHEN message = "BYE" THEN LEAVE
   OTHERWISE NOP
   END
END
EXIT
```

Copy the above example and save it as simpleport.rexx. Then open two Shell windows, and run rx simpleport in one of them. Go to the other one and type rx 'ADDRESS MYPORT GREET'. You can exit from the first Shell by typing rx 'ADDRESS MYPORT BYE' at the second Shell.

Even if you have no experience with ARexx, you will soon get the idea. Study and experiment with the above example – we will use it in our Preferences control program next time.

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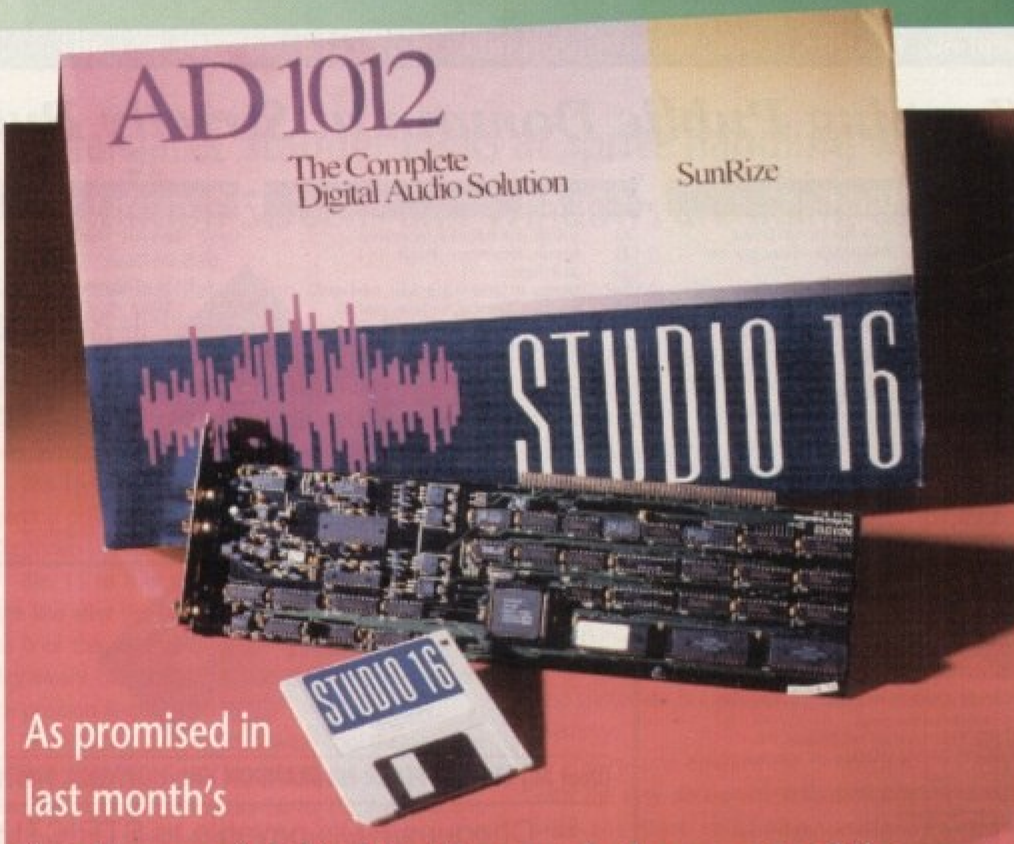
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Synchronised SunRize



As promised in last month's SunRize special, Paul Austin reveals the secrets of the SMPTE, SunRize and Bars & Pipes Professional combination

If you were wise enough to invest in last month's issue of *AC* you can't fail to have noticed our feature on the Amiga's first direct to disk recording system, namely the AD1012 from SunRize Industries.

Although most definitely an audio rather than a video release, the connection between this new board and the world of DTV is a strong one which is personified by the board's 12-bit architecture and alliance to SMPTE timecode as its primary means of communication with the real world.

As I'm sure you're aware, 16 rather than 12-bit sound is the CD standard which the music industry relies on, and the board's mono only output also points to its videographic place in market. An audio product it may be, but it's the world of video where the board will make its mark.

For the professional user, SMPTE compatibility is on hand, but for the financial mortals, SunRize have also added a direct connection to Bars & Pipes Professional, the power sequencing package from Blue Ribbon Soundworks.

The aforementioned software is the only program which has direct access to the board and its impressive sampling and sample sequencing abilities. The combination of Studio16 – AD1012's own software – and Bars & Pipes Professional is achieved by syncing the two via Studio16's own built-in SMPTE generator which supplies the necessary reference to combine the two packages.

Once joined, the union can achieve a combination of Midi music and digital audio that would be impossible using conventional analogue techniques. Whether used to add simple sound effects or entire voice-overs, the subsequent soundtrack can be amazing.

Advised

Obviously to really get the best from the combination of the two systems, SMPTE-compatible hardware in the form of SMPTE-compatible VCRs is well advised, but not necessarily essential.

As mentioned above, the Studio16 software generates its own SMPTE timecode which can be employed within the software's "cuelist" to synchronise an unlimited number of samples into a complete soundtrack.

If the necessary timecode is provided externally via a pre-striped videotape, complete frame-accurate coding of video and audio events is possible, instantly transforming your formerly amateur audio/video efforts into frame-accurate professional productions.

If your system is based around VITC rather than SMPTE timecode all is not lost as the same synchronisation can be achieved. In such a case, a VITC to SMPTE translator would be required in order to allow synchronisation with the AD1012.

Once the supplied tools and accessories are copied into the Bars & Pipes Professional toolbox and accessories draws respectively and the Bars & Pipes quit module is added to the Studo16 runtime drawer, you're ready to put their combined power into action.

The first task before any combination can take place is to load the SunMPTE accessory which will actually lock Bars & Pipes Professional to either the SMPTE timecode coming into the board or alternatively to the internally-generated timecode provided by Studio16's SMPTE generator. A second accessory, namely SunSet can also be loaded and allows any of the modules within Studio16 to appear within the Bars & Pipes Professional screen. Once active, the Instance window from Studio16 will appear giving instant access to all of the program's sample recording, editing, and sequencing abilities.

Virtual track

The final option is entitled the SunRize Virtual Track. Unlike the SunRize Out tool, this option is meant for large samples such as vocal tracks, guitar solos, and so on. It allows you to play a sample synchronised directly with other Bars & Pipes Professional tracks, in effect providing a virtual track – hence the title.

To ensure perfect synchronisation, the sample is only recorded or played back at the beginning of a measure, in a similar way that Midi recording initiates at a specific measure.

As is the case with normal samples, up to four virtual tracks can be added, all of which are treated as independent tracks within the sequence.

Re-recording over a track simply overwrites the original contents. Unfortunately the present version will only record an entire sample at a time so no matter where you start recording it will be treated as if you had started from the beginning.

Alas it appears we may have to wait a while for a digital dub, Still, even with this slight inconvenience the AD1012 , Studio16 and Bars & Pipes Professional combination offers a remarkable amount of power for a system which retails under £400.

As new and improved tools and videographic enhancements appear for the SunRize series of direct-to-disk systems and indeed any other such products, rest assured that *AC* will bring you the essential information first.

Soundtrack sampling

The first tool in the selection provides the feature which is sure to be the videophile's favourite. SunRize Out allows the user to transform Midi note events into sample play commands which then instruct the AD1012 to play specific samples.

In short it provides a perfect method of producing frame accurate sound effects. All such effects have the added bonus of being allowed to play to their entire length or alternatively to be heard until note off information is received by the sequencer.

You can select any sample already within the Sample list or alternatively use the load option to employ a pre-recorded sample from disk.

It's even possible to record the sample directly with all the usual filtering and sample rate controls on hand, and of course all recorded samples can be saved out and are assigned to their specific notes automatically. And if you don't like what you hear you can erase the sample, instantly deleting the data from the disk.

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Awesome sprite control

Margaret Stanger looks at sprite handling when Intuition Screens and Windows are being used

The picture on an Amiga screen can be in three independent layers, with the background and midground as two separate playfields. The foreground is made up of sprites – small graphic elements 16 pixels wide, two bitplanes deep, and any height.

It is possible to open an Intuition Screen and Window, and then sneak a second playfield into the display. Before opening the Screen, the ns_ViewModes flag in the NewScreen structure must include the DUALPF flag. The PFBA flag can be either set or clear, depending whether the first or second playfield has precedence.

Once the Screen is opened, there is a pointer to the Screen's ViewPort structure available to the programmer. The ViewPort has a RasInfo structure containing a pointer to the BitMap with the BitPlane information.

If the Viewport has dual playfields, the first RasInfo contains a pointer to the next RasInfo, which has a pointer to the second BitMap. In the example program an extra RasInfo structure is declared for the second playfield.

A pointer variable, *lastRasInfo, is declared to store any pointer contained in the current RasInfo for the Window, to be restored before the Screen is closed.

The Screen is opened in the usual way, the background BitMap structure attached to the Window, and the Window opened. The ViewPort address of the Window is determined.

The second RasInfo structure is initialised with the midground BitMap – all its other structure members will be zero as there are no scroll offsets, and it is the last RasInfo on the list. The first RasInfo.Next pointer is altered to point to the second RasInfo structure, and the display remade.

Each sprite has a data list of data word pairs. The first two words of each sprite's data are control words to initialise the sprite.

Bits 15 to 8 of the first control word contain the vertical position of the first line of the sprite, bits 7 to 0 contain the sprite's horizontal start position.

Bits 15 to 8 of the second control word contain the line after the last vertical line of the sprite. Bits 2 to 0 of the second control word contain the most significant bits of the first line, last line and horizontal position respectively.

The last two data words always contain zero. The intervening data words contain the pixel data. The first two sprites use colours 16 to 19, the next two 20 to 23, the next two 24 to 27 and the last two 28 to 31.

The first colour of a sprite is always transparent. A pixel will be the second colour if a bit is set in the first pixel data word, and the corresponding bit in the second pixel data word is clear; the third colour if the bit is clear in the first pixel data word and set in the second; and the fourth colour if both bits are set.

The Amiga library routines use a SimpleSprite structure that holds data for each sprite, containing the height, horizontal and vertical co-ordinates, sprite number and a pointer to its pixel data. The pixel data must be in chip memory.

```
struct SimpleSprite
{
UWORD *posctldata;
UWORD height;
UWORD  x,y;
UWORD  num;
};
```

The programmer can set up a SimpleSprite structure for a sprite, and the library routines utilise this structure, handle the sprite copper list for the ViewPort, and also update the appropriate words of the sprite pixel data with the position and height.

The GetSprite() routine can be used to entice one of the eight sprites, so that it will be at your beck and call:

```
spriteno = GetSprite(SimpleSprite,spritenum)
```

SimpleSprite is a pointer to the SimpleSprite structure used by the program for handling the sprite. The structure should contain the height of the sprite – system routines can put in the rest of the structure members if necessary.

Spritenum is a number from zero to seven if a particular sprite is required, or minus one if any of the free sprites will do.

If the routine is successful, the number of the captured sprite is returned (spriteno) and the structure member ss_num of the SimpleSprite structure is updated. The sprite copper list is not updated at this stage. If the routine is unsuccessful, a spriteno of -1 returned.

To free the unfortunate sprite for other programs to use, there is a corresponding routine, FreeSprite(spriteno), where spriteno is the number of the sprite.

To change the sprite picture:

```
ChangeSprite(ViewPort,SimpleSprite,spritedata)
```

ViewPort is the address of the relevant ViewPort, SimpleSprite a pointer to the simple sprite structure and spritedata is a pointer to the pixel data in chip memory.

This routine updates the SimpleSprite structure with the new data pointer, updates the sprite data with the start and finish positions from the SimpleSprite structure, and updates the sprite copper list with the new information.

To move the sprite :

```
MoveSprite(ViewPort,SimpleSprite,x,y)
```

ViewPort is the address of the relevant ViewPort, SimpleSprite a pointer to the simple sprite structure and x and y are the new horizontal and vertical pixel positions of the start of the sprite.

This routine updates the SimpleSprite structure with the new positions, updates the sprite data with the new start and finish positions, and updates the sprite copper list with the new information.

The more discerning among you will notice that I have not attempted to use sprite 0. This is because the program's Intuition Window is already using sprite zero as its pointer, and attempting to grab it will result in an embarrassing clash of interests.

The GetSprite() routine will be unsuccessful, and any subsequent attempts to move, change or free sprite zero will result in a program crash.

Sprite one shares its colours with sprite zero, and will be resplendent in the same colours as the Intuition pointer.

There is an Intuition routine to alter the pointer:

```
SetPointer(Window,spritedata,height,width,xoffset,y
offset)
```

Window is a pointer to the current Window, spritedata is a pointer to the pixel data in chip memory – this data is set up in the same way as it was for the sprites. The height and width are the horizontal and vertical sizes of the new pointer but the width must be 16 or less.

xoffset and yoffset are the distances of the pointer "hot spot" from its top left-hand corner. There is a corresponding routine, ClearPointer(Window), which changes the pointer back to the default setting defined in Preferences, usually a boring arrow shape.

Demos on the disk

The demo program on the CoverDisk contains two source modules, csprite.c and iffread.c, which can be compiled and linked together in the normal way.

Iffread.c is the general purpose picture file reader, and csprite.c is the calling program. csprite.c includes a header file csprite.h containing sprite data.

The object module, csprite, opens a Screen, and a Window in that Screen. The ILBM picture files, with the filenames specified in the calling program, are opened and the picture data read into the appropriate BitPlanes.

The files are closed, and control goes back to the main program. The pictures from the IFF files are displayed as two separate playfields. Seven sprites are allocated to SimpleSprite structures. Each sprite is moved to its place in a horizontal line up, using the sprite data defined in the header file "csprite.h".

The picture is displayed on the Screen until the user closes the Window, or clicks a mouse button. The sprites are freed, the Window and Screen closed, and the program exits.

KCS Power PC Board

PC Emulation on your Amiga

About...

The KCS Power PC is a complete 11MHz 1Mb PC sub-system that can be fitted to any Amiga in minutes.

Based around NEC's highly successful V30 CPU, the Power PC Board offers a very high degree of compatibility at machine language level, yet runs faster than an equivalent Intel 8086.

The 1Mb of Autoconfig™ memory can be accessed by all current Amiga models including the A500 Plus. Even the original A500 can access 512K as a standard expansion with clock; plus a 512K RAM disk.

Adored by critics and users alike, the KCS Power PC Board is a real alternative to buying a complete PC clone.

Installation

The KCS Power PC board fits to any Amiga in minutes:

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• On bigger Amigas, such as the 1500/2000/2500/3000, it drops into a vacant Amiga slot using the custom designed adaptor board.

• Once fitted, your Amiga can be switched into PC mode simply by clicking an icon. Just reset and it's an Amiga again.

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Video

• Supports the majority of EGA and VGA modes in 16 glorious colours and monochrome – graphics up to 640x480 and text too. Interlace is required for some modes but a software flicker fixer is built in.

• Other video modes include MDA and CGA text and graphics. Also supports Tandy colour graphics adaptor and Hercules monochrome.

• EGA and VGA graphics can be displayed on a domestic TV or monitor. Unlike *real* PCs, no extra hardware is required.

Disk

• Up to four Amiga drives can be connected to your system and accessed in PC modes as 3.5" 720K or 5.25" 360K. Typical disk access is at least twice as fast as most real PC clones!

• DOS can be started from any mounted drive 5.25" or 3.5" and most Amiga hard drives.

• Supports most popular hard disks including GVP Impact, Supra and A590 (Omil and SCSI).

• A massive 200K ramdrive (up to 8Mb with expansion) is available in PC mode and it's PC-reset proof too.

Memory

• Even with a base Amiga 704K is free for DOS programs (640K in EGA and VGA modes).

• EMS (expanded memory) is supported allowing you to run Microsoft Windows without problems and store massive files in Lotus 1-2-3. So, if you have 8Mb on board, the PC can use it.

• XMS (extended memory) is supported – even though this is not usually possible on NEC V30 machines.

Speed

Its Landmark speed puts it way ahead of many true PC systems – it even compares favourably with many AT clones.

However, the crux of the matter lies with the video speed; and this, as many critics have noted is where the KCS Power PC Board scores over all others. It's no use having a wizz-bang processor if the screen takes several seconds to redraw itself.

• Tests in text modes have shown it is several times faster than evenAT clones with dedicated video hardware. Even in graphics modes, it's no slouch although the emulation is limited by Amiga hardware.

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Mouse

• Automatic serial mouse emulation is supplied as standard – using your existingAmiga rodent.

• Mouse can be configured as COM1 or COM2.

Joystick

• Up to two sticks can be employed at any time. You decide how they are arranged.

Printer

• Your Amiga's parallel port is accessed as LPT1 in PC mode.

Serial

• DOS usually supports two serial ports, but one is taken by the Amiga mouse. The Amiga's serial can be set as COM1 or COM2 as desired, ie for MODEM etc. up to 19200 baud full-duplex.

Sound

• PC sound is supported, but there's an additional volume control available in software.

Works on...

• All Amigas (except the a1000) fitted with Kickstart 1.2 and Workbench 1.2 or higher.

• Extra memory is not required, but full use will be made of extra hardware, like accelerators, flicker fixers, modems etc.

Help!

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Updates...

• Since the hardware is a complete PC in its own right, all updates are completely software driven. Registered users can update at any time for a nominal fee to cover media and shipping costs.

"PC emulation is a contentious issue – but the KCS Power PC board is the only one to carry my personal recommendation. It is an excellent product that does all it claims and does it well."– *comments Mark Smiddy, co-author of Mastering AmigaDOS 2.*

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Successful sampling

Paul Austin explains how to get the best from the Amiga's internal sound and looks ahead to the musical Amigas of the future...

Although the Amiga's existing sampling skills easily outstrip the opposition as far as internally generated computer sound is concerned they nevertheless leave a lot to be desired in comparison to professional studio quality sampling equipment.

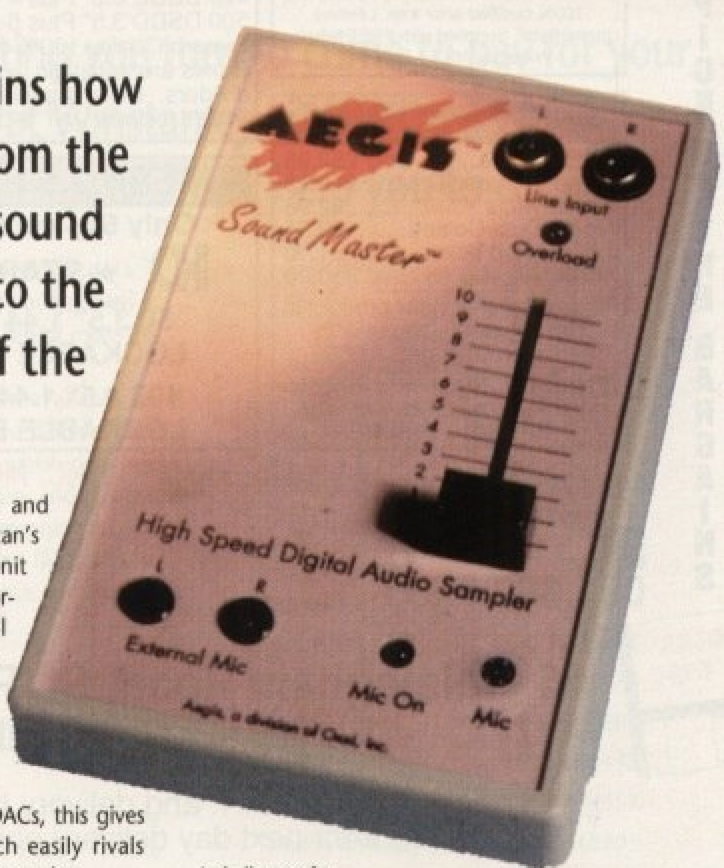
Having said that, for those of us on a budget the 8-bit stop gap offered by the Amiga can provide a perfect note pad for experiments that can then be expanded within the 16-bit environment of the studio.

In addition, the rave scene isn't averse to sacrificing a little sound quality on occasion and as a result many a repetitive hook in among the Italian piano and pumping bass has made its first steps onto vinyl via the Amiga's humble sound chip.

Because of the machine's built-in ability to play up to four 8-bit samples simultaneously, all the major Amiga sequencing packages can take advantage of this option while dealing with Midi information for external hardware.

If you've spent any time at all browsing through the vast array of Amiga magazines, you've probably noticed it's impossible to turn more than a few pages without being assaulted by an increasingly garish array of ads screaming the praises of an endless collection of sampler/software combinations.

Although there are a few good cheap and cheerful units on the market, it's worth investing those extra few pounds on quality kit. At the forefront of Amiga sampling are two units which have been adopted by almost all the leading Amiga musos. The first, most expensive, and arguably the best of these is RamScan's Audio Engineer. This particular unit offers unbelievable quality, considering its 8-bit design, allowing full stereo sampling which benefits from the best filter and anti-aliasing circuitry around.



A challenger for Audio Engineer

Unbeatable

When combined with its twin DACs, this gives it unbeatable sound quality which easily rivals many 12-bit and even a few 16-bit samplers.

As is the case with all quality samplers, editing software comes as part of the package - as you'd expect from a unit costing £199. The software in question is one of the top two packages on the market and although labelled Audio Engineer, is in reality AudioMaster 3.

This is a package which has only recently been challenged – and some would say beaten – by Audition4, a standalone sample editor/sample sequencing package.

The second quality sampler on the market, entitled Sound Master is the only unit capable of challenging Audio Engineer. Although it doesn't offer the same degree of control available via its competitor, it does produce equally impressive results, and like it's counterpart comes with Audio Master 3 as part of the £129 package.



Audio Engineer: incredible 8-bit quality

Waveform tuning

Once equipped with a sampler, the next task is to master the art of getting the best from the available eight bits. To do this a quality sound source is essential but in addition it's worth becoming familiar with the accompanying software.

Both samplers and either of the two sampling software packages will sample right up to 57kHz. If you have the necessary RAM, always push the initial sampling rate to the maximum and then employ the software's waveform tuning to re-sample the sound to the desired pitch. That way you'll always get the very best from the sound, sampler and software combination.

Music of the future

According to an anonymous source, the rumoured specifications of a new generation of Amigas appear to have hit the mark. The two new machines take the form of an A4000 040-based machine and a 16MHz 030-based A1000 Classic which could also appear as the A800. Both machines will boast the new AA chipset with 2.1 ROMs.

The A4000 variant will come as standard with 16Mb of fast Ram and 4Mb of chip memory expandable to 64Mb and 16Mb respectively. The chip memory is of special importance if Commodore continue their approach of holding all sample data within the machine's chip memory.

The A1000 Classic/A800 comes in what's been described as a Pizza-style slimline case offering expandability up to 4Mb of chip memory and 16Mb of RAM. Both machines will also boast a true full speed double density floppy. For we musos the most interesting aspect of the upgrade is the new machine's awesome musical potential, with full 16-bit four-channel sound at an amazing 56kHz. In short, instant CD quality sampling plus twin built-in Midi ports as standard.

There's even provision for an accompanying microphone to plug directly into the built-in digitiser, allowing direct 8-bit 28MHz sampling.

Another pleasant feature is that the machines won't just be limited to 16-bit resolution – emulation has been added to enable eight 8-bit channels to operate at 56kHz and up to 16 8-bit channels at a very respectable 28kHz.

Our unnamed source is already in the process of Beta testing both products so there's no reason why at least one of the machines shouldn't be released in the Autumn. It looks likely that the 030-based machine will be the first to greet the light of day with the A4000 making its debut in the spring of next year.

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Feeding the habit

We're not suggesting you turn to crime to pay for your BBS addiction. Pat Winstanley looks instead at some ingenious software which will help you to cut costs

When you call a bulletin board you may find yourself spending quite a lot of time on the phone simply wading through information screens, menus and so on.

This is in addition to finding the message area you want and the time taken to actually read and reply to messages. If you only call a board once a week or so this is fine, but if the addiction grips you'll want to call almost every day to see what's new. At this stage it makes sense to spend as little time actually on the board as possible.

In order to achieve this, many boards offer one or more methods of grabbing the messages you want to read and allowing you to download them to study offline.

Sometimes this will simply be a menu option which bundles all new messages in your chosen area, or it might be a "door". A door is another program which is run by the BBS. For the Amiga user the current choice is between Silver Express and Blue Wave. Ask your local sysop for details of these.

If the board carries either of these doors, the board's file areas will almost certainly carry some shareware programs to allow you to read and reply to messages offline.

Timetable

Another, and even more efficient, method of reading offline is to become a point. What this effectively does is set you up as a little private bulletin board on your own machine. Instead of other users ringing you, your timetable dictates when you will call the main board, just as it does with casual use.

The big advantage is that when you log on to a board as a point you never go into the main area of the board, so save time and typing. As a point logs on, all new messages from previously chosen echoes are waiting, ready archived for download.

Also, any replies you have prepared offline are sitting waiting on your machine for upload to the board. This swapping of compressed data is unlikely to take more than a few minutes, even if, like me, you are hooked into a dozen or more different echoes.

Various software packages are available for point work. Basically you need two different programs – one to act as a terminal which dials into the board, sends your messages up, and receives new ones back, and a reader/writer which accepts the newly downloaded compressed files, uncompresses them, and sorts them into the various areas or echoes where they belong.

Reply

For replying you'll also need some sort of text editor, but even the humble "ed" from the Workbench disk will do the job.

Another great advantage of being a point is the ability to send messages to other BBSs – for the cost of a local call – and request the distant boards to send you files for download. This is the reason for messages you may meet on the lines of "Yes, I have the file you're looking for, just freq it from my board."

Not all sysops allow this, but many do, and information about the location of various obscure – or brand new – files is passed around freely on the system.

Netmail is another advantage of becoming a point. Netmail is private mail which nobody but you or the recipient can read. It's a useful service when you need to talk privately with a user either locally or at a distance, but don't want to either bore others or let them know what you're up to.

Again, some sysops allow the passage of private mail, but others do not. Netmail can also be used to send a file to a specific person by attaching it to your message. While most offline readers allow messages to be written to open echoes, they generally lack the facility to send netmail – although it can be received by you. So even if your sysop allows private mail, the software may not!

Netmail is also used to tell your node which echoes you wish to receive. A program called AreaFix handles this painlessly. Simply specify the area you wish to add or subtract from your chosen list and the software will do the rest.

Being a point demands a certain amount of discipline and responsibility. Before even considering asking for the facility you should consider whether you are prepared to log on at least daily to collect your messages. While the bundling at the Board end is relatively automated, the longer your bundle sits there the longer you are using your sysop's precious disk space.

Another thing to bear in mind before becoming a point is the difficulty of setting up the various pieces of software needed to run successfully. While the various packages are easy to use once running, the configuration procedure can take weeks, even for the experts.

Documentation is definitely aimed at people who know both their Amiga and the Fidonet system inside out, although you will find plenty of willing – if sometimes incomprehensible – help from both the sysop and your fellow pointers. When you see even the experts tearing their hair out it does make you feel a little less stupid!

Dial-up list

Bulletin Boards can be found all over the world. The following are a selection which cover the Amiga in various fields of interest.

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Fidonet addressing

Fidonet is an organisation which links bulletin boards together right across the world. All BBSs on Fidonet have a unique address which is made up of several parts.

For the newcomer these addresses look rather confusing, but they are really quite simple. For instance my own address on the Fidonet system is 2:250/107.99 which is made up as follows:

Zone 2	The world is divided into several zones, each numbered. For instance 1 = America, while 2 = Europe.
Net 250	Each zone covers a wide area so this is subdivided into nets of more manageable sizes. Nets are roughly geographical, for instance 250 covers Manchester.
Node 107	Within each net, every BBS on the system has its own node number. Thus here 107 is the number of Aspects BBS which is my local board.
Point 99	Some BBSs allow regular users to become points off their boards. Briefly apoint is the lowest of the low on the Fido system but has advantages over casual BBS callers.

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Nurse, the screens!

Phil South pulls down a few screens and fills them with all kinds of what can only be described as "stuff"

Although you may already know this, Amos has some very powerful commands for the manipulation of screens and their contents. You will know by now how to load and define screens, sure, even if you've only just bought the program.

What about moving screens around once you have them defined and loaded? Amos has a number of very useful (I love understatement, don't you?) commands for manipulating screens, and these are easy to spot as they usually have the word "screen" in them.

Screen Hide will take a screen you've loaded and send it away somewhere until it is needed. To show it again you just need to use the Screen Show command. Logical really, and as always in Amos Show and Hide are the exact opposite when applied to what you might call visual commands.

The best place to hide an Amos screen of course is in a SPACKed memory bank and a Packed Picture, as it takes up less memory.

Screen Copy is used as a part of the process of scrolling all or part of screens, in combination with Def Scroll, Scroll and Screen Swap, as we see in this example:

```
Load Iff "name your path and picture here",1
Screen Open 0,320,256,32,Lowres
Get Palette 1 : Curs Off : Flash Off
```

This is all the usual setup guff, and if you've got any sense you'll stick this away as a file to merge to save you typing in all this before you begin.

The file you choose is loaded into screen 1, which at the moment is invisible:

```
Screen Copy 1 To 0 : Screen 0 : Double Buffer
: Bob Update Off
```

You've opened a screen 0 and you're copying screen 1 to 0, then making the system show screen 0. Double buffering makes things nice and smooth by hiding any loading of images:

```
S=2
Def Scroll 1,80,80 To 240,240,0,-S
```

S is the increment of the scroll, and the Def Scroll routine defines the area of the scroll using the usual co-ordinates. Next you need to set up a loop and feed the increments to it:

```
Repeat
   For Y=0 To 199 Step S
      Scroll 1
      Screen Copy 1,80,Y,240,Y+S To 0,80,240-S
      Screen Swap
      Screen Copy 1,80,Y,240,Y+S To 0,80,240-S
      Wait Vbl
   Next Y
   Screen Swap : Wait Vbl : Scroll 1
Until Mouse Key
```

So the area defined by the Def Scroll statement is scrolled upwards using the Repeat Until loop. This is done over and over until any mouse button is pressed, at which time the program stops.

Choose a picture which has some colours and shapes on it. If the picture is too plain you won't really see the effect.



Mastering Amiga Amos

As well as being the Amos guru for *Amiga Computing*, Phil South is also the author of a number of Amiga books like *Mastering Amiga Beginners*, soon to be joined in the Autumn by *Mastering Amiga Amos*

This book is a companion to the Amos manual giving you a load of examples to type in and hints and tips on all aspects of coding using the Amos system, from beginners to advanced.

For more details about this and other Bruce Smith Books call (0923) 894355.

Your letters

Paul Jermany writes: "Why is it that when I design a sprite using the Amos Sprite Editor, for example a red apple, it appears blue on the screen, although when I use the Bob command it appears as it should. I phoned the Amos help line and they suggested the following:

```
For I= 0 To 15
C=Colour(I)
Colour 16+I,C
Next I
```

At last I can get my sprites on the screen in their true colours, but the program failed. Is it something I'm doing wrong?"

You didn't mention Paul if you were using the Get Sprite Palette command. Are you? Of course you are. One reason for the problem is that Bobs use the screen palette and the sprites use the next 16 colours along, which is what your little proggy from Europress was all about.

The thing is that the Amos Sprite Editor is in fact a Bob editor, which is why if you load the objects as sprites you will get goofy colours. So use the Bob commands and have done with it, that's my advice to you. The speed difference is minimal and the benefits of Bobs over sprites is worth it. Sprites are hardware limited, and Bobs are no limits but slightly slower. I know which I prefer.

Invisible screen

Screen swap uses an "invisible" screen called the "logical screen" on which it renders things like scrolls, like in our example. When the object or screen has been modified, the results are copied to the real screen. Logical screens are very useful for smoothing otherwise slow or clunky rendering routines. Try the last example and alter the settings to see how it changes when you adapt certain parts of the program, particularly the Def Scroll and Screen Copy lines.

Now then, this is when it starts to get really interesting. In the Amiga's display system, a dual playfield is where two Amiga screens are visible at the same time, overlaid one on the other, where one is visible through the other.

This is a handy effect for what they call in the game reviewing business "parallax scrolling", like in the game Shadow of the Beast. There is a good Amos demo which parodies this effect, called Madness Week by the famous French Amos hacker Syntex. Get it from the Amos PD Library, and you'll see what I mean.

Write stuff

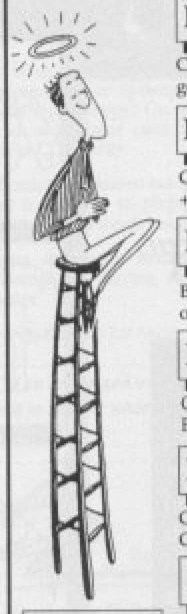
If you have an Amos question, then please write to Phil South, Amos Column, Amiga Computing, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.

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Smooth talkin' guy

Ben Pointer describes the benefits of structured drawings and looks at a PD collection for PageStream 2.2 users

WAs Compugraphic typefaces are to Amiga bitmapped fonts, so structured drawings are to bitmapped graphics. The key word here is "scalable".

It's a bit of a misleading term. Scalable means exactly what it says – able to be scaled, scaled as in resized, that is. Anyone who has played with text in Deluxe Paint will know that they can quickly scale any text they put on the screen by cutting it out as a brush and hitting either the h or H keys. And that text is a bitmapped font.

So how come we say Compugraphic typefaces are scalable and bitmapped fonts aren't? The answer is probably laziness. What we actually mean is that Compugraphic typefaces can be scaled to any size and still keep their original shape.

Most importantly, a smooth curve in a Compugraphic character will always remain a smooth curve, no matter how large it is sized.

Conversely, increase the size of a bitmapped character and it will result in the small steps that form the curve being magnified into larger steps, giving it a staircase appearance. It is a shortcoming often called "the jaggies".

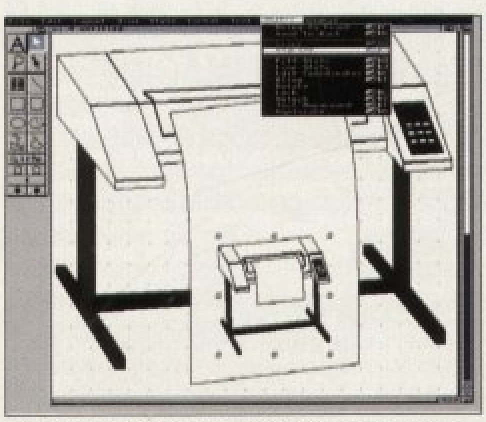
Bitmapped

And it's the same with bitmapped graphics. IFF ILBM pictures – the kind produced with such programs as Deluxe Paint, Digi-Paint and Photon Paint for example – are bitmapped graphics; indeed the BM part of ILBM stands for bitmap.

You shouldn't let the term bitmap confuse you, it merely means that the object the word has been used with – for example, here we've been talking about bitmapped graphics and bitmapped fonts – is charted out in memory so that one memory location represents one pixel on the screen.



From simple symbols to complex drawings, Illustrator Clip Art has a piece of artwork for all occasions



Every Illustrator Clip can be ungrouped and edited from with PageStream 2.2, allowing you to create your own customised graphics by pinching bits of various drawings and mixing them together

The advantage of this technique is that graphics and characters can be placed on the screen very quickly indeed. Ah, but enlarge the size of a bitmapped graphic and the outlines of the elements that make up the picture become more jagged because each square pixel is simply doubled in size.

Reduce the size a bitmapped graphic and data has to be removed from the picture because there is no longer room for it in the smaller bitmap.

Structured drawings work differently. The lines and shapes you draw using the drawing tools in your desktop publishing program will all be structured drawings.

Instead of the computer remembering how to draw the shape by mapping each point to a memory location, it does it by remembering "control points" long the line or around the outline of the shape, and mathematical equations that describe how to draw a line or curve to another control point.

No jaggies

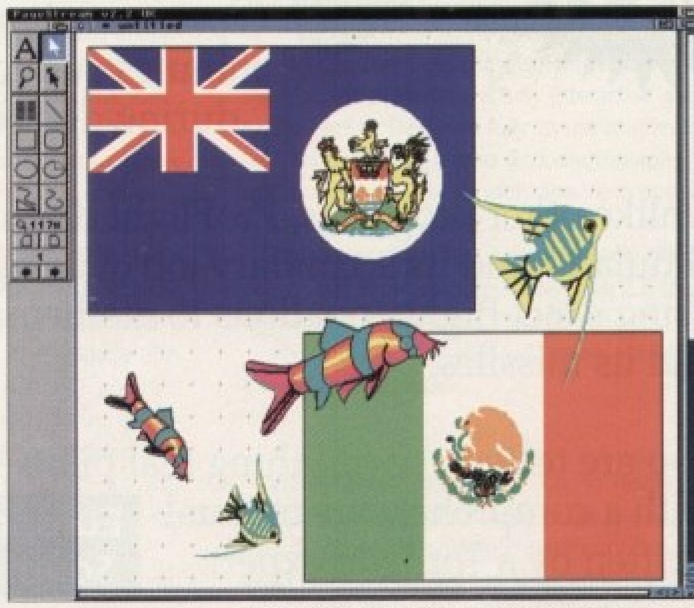
Like Compugraphic outline fonts, if you enlarge or reduce the size of a structured drawing it will retain its original shape. No jaggies, to put it in a nutshell.

The price you pay is speed and memory. It takes far longer to render a structured drawing because the software has to first calculate all those equations, and then convert the result into a bitmap that can be displayed on the screen.

A structured drawing of anything other than a simple shape takes more memory because all the mathematical equations (or vectors) have to be stored in memory as well as the bitmapped version for screen display purposes.

By far the easiest way to incorporate structured drawing in your desktop-published documents is to buy some structured clip art. Most of the commercial structured clip art available for the Amiga comes in Pro Draw's clip format, and can be imported into both ProPage and PageStream.

But the most popular structured drawing format for desktop publishing is that created by Adobe Illustrator, a program not available on the Amiga, more's the pity. However PageStream 2.2 owners are able to import and even edit Adobe Illustrator drawings, which opens up to them the big wide world of public domain structured drawings.



Illustrator Clip Art even has a few coloured graphics, although I'm not sure I'll ever find a use for the flag of Mexico

Illustrator art

The first Amiga collection of public domain Adobe Illustrator art has recently be released by George Thompson Services. Supplied on three disks for £9.99, there are 106 clips to investigate, some of which themselves are small collections of drawings.

The vast majority of it is mono art (black and white and shades of grey), in fact I could find only three clips that contained colours – two flags and something fishy. But then most of us are using mono printers anyway, so we won't find this to be a problem.

Subject matter varies widely. The files have not been grouped into directories of related drawings, rather everything is saved in the one directory (on each disk) with a sensible filename that describes the graphic.

So it's well done to George Thompson Services for taking the time to put this collection together. At less than 10p per clip, let's hope it sells well and more public domain structured drawing collections appear very soon.

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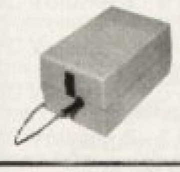
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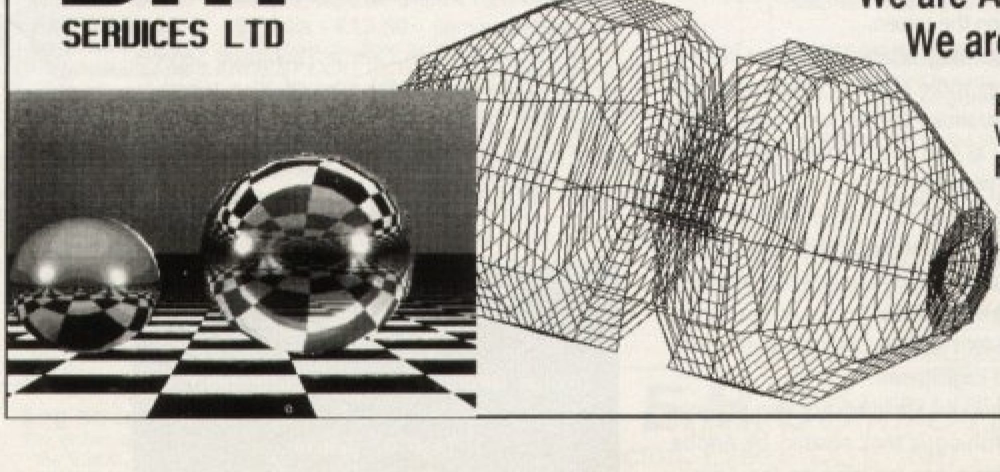
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Modem Users Check Out Our Areas On Tech Support And Tips - On The 01 For AMIGA BBS

In the pipeline

Dave Winder previews a host of titles due out on CDTV soon

This month I will be looking at what is happening at Almathera Systems Ltd, one of the few companies presently manufacturing software for the CDTV/CD-ROM setups.

The first release from Almathera was Fractal Universe, a journey into the wonderful world of fractals, allowing the user to create their own as well as learn about the history and theory of the subject, and of course a massive on disk gallery of fractal images.

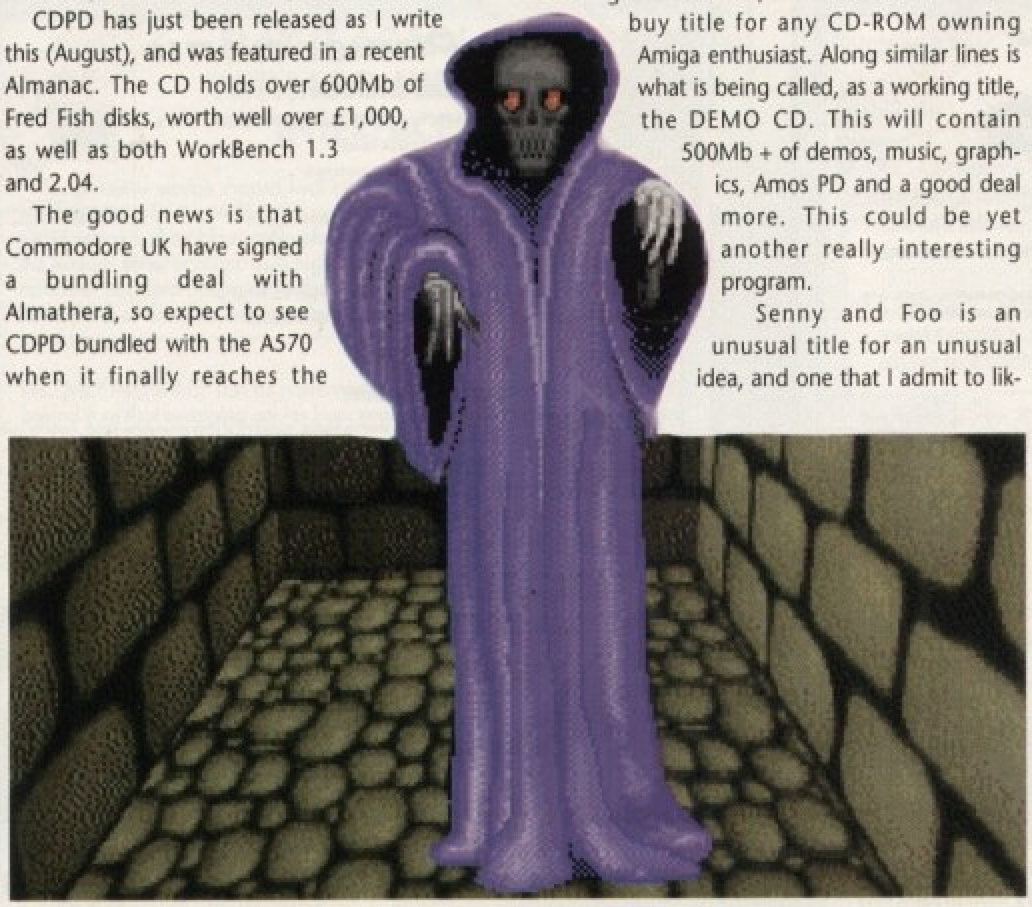
A full review of Fractal Universe appears in the August issue of *Amiga Computing*. A PC CD-ROM version is also now in development. A hard act to follow, but followed it was, and how.

CDPD has just been released as I write this (August), and was featured in a recent Almanac. The CD holds over 600Mb of Fred Fish disks, worth well over £1,000, as well as both WorkBench 1.3 and 2.04.

The good news is that Commodore UK have signed a bundling deal with Almathera, so expect to see CDPD bundled with the A570 when it finally reaches the masses. In development at the moment is the follow up to CDPD, CDPD-2. As well as containing Fred Fish disks up to around 750 in archive form, the CD will also feature the entire JAM collection, and of course WorkBench 1.3 and 2.04 as before (which are copyright Commodore of course).

CDPD-2 should be available by the time you get to read this, and will be another must buy title for any CD-ROM owning Amiga enthusiast. Along similar lines is what is being called, as a working title, the DEMO CD. This will contain 500Mb + of demos, music, graphics, Amos PD and a good deal more. This could be yet another really interesting program.

Senny and Foo is an unusual title for an unusual idea, and one that I admit to liking quite a lot. This is an illustrated poem, aimed at children in the age range of 7 to 12 years, to help them appreciate metre and form.



There is also an adventure game which takes place over four universes. Packed full of animation, with puzzles and games galore, it sounds as if this could be a good item to put on the Christmas present list. Due out in November.

The London Guide is also under development at the moment – a fully interactive guide to the capital. Designed fully to use multimedia with thousands of entries and photographs, as well as the sounds of London (the mind boggles as to what they may be).

Almathera's MD, Paul Ralph, told me: "This is one of our most ambitious titles, we'll bring it out when it is fully ready and not before."

My guess is that this will mean sometime around Spring 1993.

A long time

Video Creator promises much, so much that it is taking a long time indeed to see the light of day. It "allows the user to create his or her own professional pop videos to accompany any music CD. With an optional Genlock and a camcorder you can even star in your own pop video".

Almathera seem to be quite sure that the final product can be as exciting as it sounds, and I certainly hope they are correct. Don't expect to see this until next year though.

A series of CDs based on the RAF Museum at Hendon's collection is in the pipeline. If you are interested in aircraft, and the RAF in particular, expect to be amazed at the quality of the material, both still photographs and animated sequences, that should be in the final titles.

There was a risk at one stage that this project may have been lost to CD-I, but I am glad to say that it is definitely a CDTV title in progress now.

Script form

Finally a look at a project in progress, which is still only in script form as I write.

Almathera's Book of Spells is designed to help you fly, blight your neighbours' cattle, or turn your boss into a toad. Paul Ralph tells me this is going to be the definitive history and practices of magic as never before told, promising to list over a hundred demons you don't want to meet.

There will be no warranty on the spells however, as some may not work on CDTV, or anywhere for that matter. "I've learnt some interesting stuff which should be part of every management training schedule," says Paul who is the writer and producer on this particular title.

Due out hopefully in Spring 1993, this is definitely going to be a very humorous CD and one that should not be taken too seriously, if you see what I mean.

Custom built

Games that have been written for the CDTV platform, instead of ported straight over from the Amiga, have been in short supply so far. In fact, Online Entertainment have been the only people really working in this direction.

Now Almathera are about to join the games race, with Treasure Quest. I have seen the development version of this – an animated board game is the best way to describe it. The player takes the part of a young adventurer accepting the challenge of the King of Bossanovia to enter Wizard Elsiled's Magical Maze and find as much treasure as they can.

The maze is randomly generating, and so is different every game. The monsters are impressive, all the voices being performed by professional actors, and their response to your questions differs according to their mood.

There are plans for games within the game, including arcade games and game shows. A fruit machine was being programmed when I tested it.

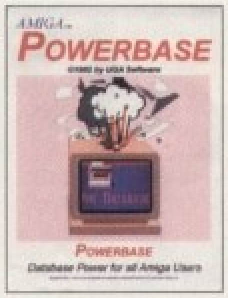
Designed as a game for more than one player, it is at its best when there are at least four players – the maximum is eight. Treasure Quest looks like it could be a good alternative to playing a board game, and as such should appeal to the family audience. It is due out in November.

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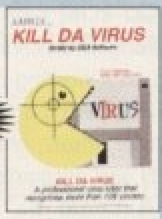
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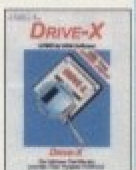
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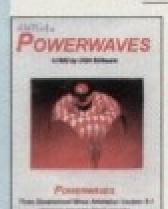
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- Easy to use graphic interface, with 3D-look pop-up menus/gadgets.
- Uses 40 different maths functions for drawing animations. Up to three different formulae can be combined for realistic simulations, achieving an almost unlimited number of variations.
- Powerwaves' formulas may be used to generate cyclic distorted surfaces and may be used to reproduce interesting elastic deformations, like a simulation of the effect of the weight of a rigid body on an elastic one, to apply "ripples" on a surface, to deformate IFF pictures etc.
- Directly supports the "Sculpt-Animate 3D/4D"/"Videoscape" object and script file formats.
- Generates IFF animations by saving single frame IFF pictures, named in a numeric sequence. This is especially useful for loading pictures in Deluxe Paint III/IV.
- Includes clear English documentation, sample pictures and some ready-to-test parameters.

POWERWAVES £17.95 9520

POWERMENU £17.95 9862

X-COPY PROFESSIONAL

This superb package enables the Amiga user to back up their discs efficiently and effectively.

Features include:

- The most comprehensive back-up utility
- Includes floppy disk back-up, hard disk back-up and file back-up
- Also backs up ST, IBM etc disks
- Checks disks for errors
- Optimises data for faster loading
- Fast formatting
- Copies up to 4 disks in 48 seconds
- Full update service available

X-COPY PROFESSIONAL caters for all your needs, included in the package is a small hardware interface that plugs into the external disk drive port at rear of the Amiga and your external disk drive (if you have one) plugs into the back of the interface. This allows the Digital Bit Image Copy Mode to use the Adaptive Pulse Width Modulation routines to backup virtually all known discs.

1988 COPYRIGHT ACT Europress Direct neither condones nor authorises the use of this software for the reproduction of copyrighted software. The facilities offered by X-Copy Pro are intended to backup users own software, PD Software & other such programs where permission had been given. It is illegal to make copies of copyrighted material without the permission of the copyright holder.

£35.95 9523

MEGAMIX MASTER

MEGAMIX Master is high specification, low cost digital effects cartridge that plugs into your printer port. Special stereo effects such as echo can be added in real time. You will find Megamix Master's performace and easer of use unmatched by any rival. Just plug it in and go.

Some of the features include:

- Thru port for printer or digitiser
- Fully multi-tasking
- Intergrated 3.5m m jack plug and lead
- 3D Animated icons
- Compatible with Workbench 2.0
- Both Mono and Stereo sampling

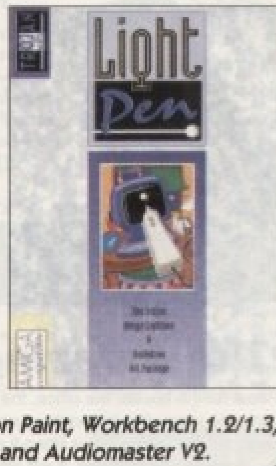
£35.95 9924

All our prices include VAT

SUPER BARGAIN OFFERS

TROJAN LIGHT PEN

Attention All Designers!



The Trojan Amiga compatible lightpen can be used as a complete replacement for the mouse in many applications. Particularly useful in drawing and design, the two button pen provides the user with a very direct method of control.

This package also includes KWIKDRAW - a lightpen compatible drawing program, plus a lightpen driver that allows the pen to be used with most programs that run from Amiga Workbench. The lightpen is also compatible with: *DPaint III and IV, Photon Paint, Workbench 1.2/1.3, Battlechess, Professional Page, Music-X and Audiomaster V2.*

Easy to use, the Trojan lightpen will have you producing designs and drawings that are far superior to those produced using a mouse.

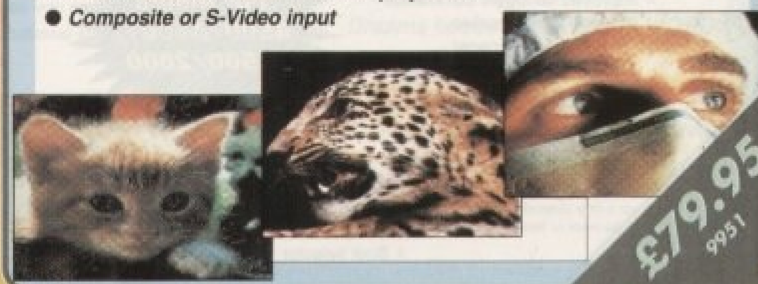
£34.95 9870

VIDI AMIGA 12

Vidi Amiga 12 is the ultimate low cost colour digitiser for the Amiga. There are no filters and no separate RGB Splitter. Colour images can be captured in less than a second, mono images are grabbed in real time. Fully compatible with any video source.

Some of the features include:

- ***Multi-tasking software***
- ***Advanced error diffusion stippling***
- ***Cut ans Paste with masking***
- ***Capture into a user definable window***
- ***Load and save IFF ILBM and ANIM files***
- ***Grab frames flipped on an X or Y axis***
- ***Multi frame store with animated playback***
- ***Composite or S-Video input***



£79.95 9951

PRO MIDI INTERFACE

PLAY IT AGAIN WITH PRO MIDI INTERFACE!



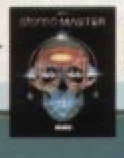
This attractive wedge shaped Midi Interface incorporates MIDI-IN, MIDI-THRU and TWO MIDI-OUT ports. The flat ribbon cable plugs straight into the Amigas serial port and uses high quality computer standard ribbon cable that eliminates the possibilities of data loss between the computer and interface.

PRO MIDI INTERFACE can be positioned alongside the computer rather than behind it so that swapping cables from one Midi device to another becomes a simple task.

PRO MIDI INTERFACE comes with a disk full of public domain programs allowing immediate use, plus a user's guide that explains Midi and how to connect up different devices to the computer. (Midi cables not included).

PRO MIDI INTERFACE is a full professional standard interface, fully compatible with all Midi keyboards, drum machines etc.

Also available: Stereo Master

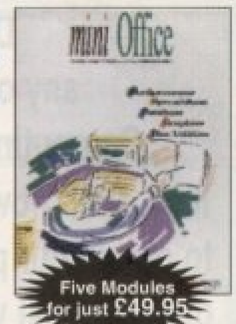


Code	Price
9814	£34.95

£22.95 9513

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THE PERFECT ALL-IN PACKAGE FOR YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS



Five Modules for just £49.95

★ A professional **WORDPROCESSOR** with powerful graphics capabilities and a 50,000 word spell checker. Ideal for a wide variety of correspondence and official documents.

★ A versatile **DATABASE** which is simple to use and powerful enough to deal with anything from basic address book functions to club membership lists and business records.

★ A flexible **SPREADSHEET** with more than 50 functions, simplifying the most complex domestic monthly budgets or commercial cash flow forecasts.

★ A supremely friendly **DISC MANAGER** to make using your Amiga as painless a task as possible.

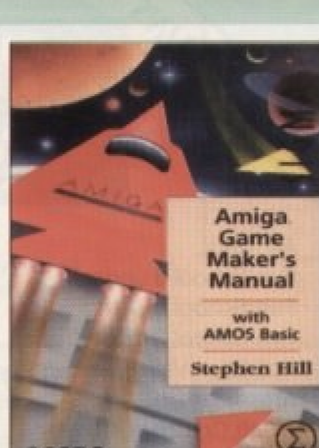
★ Incredible **GRAPHICS** with more than 18 types of graphs and charts available to brighten up your presentations or make your month by month financial situation as easy to appreciate as possible. You can even make use of eye-catching 3D effects!

£49.95 9832

GAME MAKER'S MANUAL

Amiga Game Maker's Manual – with AMOS Basic

by Stephen Hill



Stephen is the author of Sigma's best-selling *The Game Maker's Manual* for the Atari ST - and he's the author of the new AMOS (Amiga Operating System) Manual, so nobody is better placed to write this book.

The creator of AMOS, Francois Lionette, has produced the most powerful games programming system. With it, Amiga games equivalent to such best sellers as Xenon 2 and Blood Money can be produced – it's so straightforward that many people will buy an Amiga simply to run AMOS Basic.

The contents include: Game planning - graphic design, mock-ups and sprites; Shoot-'em-ups - high speed AMOS sprites, fire control, collision detection, background animation; Simulations - from simple 3D movement to flight simulators; Role playing - characters, scenarios and magic; Adventure games - plans, rooms and commands; Animation, scrolling, sound and 3D; Links to assembler. Numerous tested, working programs illustrate the book.

£16.95 9886

REAL-TIME 3D GRAPHICS

The Amiga is a powerful computer with superb graphics – but how do you write programs with smooth-flowing 3D effects like the ones in the best arcade games and in 'virtual reality' multimedia kit? How do you produce high speed animation in real time controlled by the Amiga joystick? This book shows you how to solve these problems and – at the same time – to learn about Amiga assembly language painlessly and enjoyably.

Contents include assembly programming, screen mapping; the use of bit planes; screens; colour; the copper; extensive blitter programming; real-time solid vector graphics; transformations – rotations, translations, enlargements, shears, perspective; input from the keyboard and joystick; hidden surface removal and illumination from a light source; building a 3D world of animated objects and flying around it under joystick control.

Reader Convenience Disk

The programs in the book are all listed from actual, working, source code. However to avoid the effort of typing them all out – and the risk of typing errors, a disk is available.

Book £14.95 9833

Book & Disc £23.95 9875

All our prices include VAT

CHRISTMAS OFFERS

Action Replay

THE WORLDS MOST POWERFUL FREEZER UTILITY CARTRIDGE

Features:

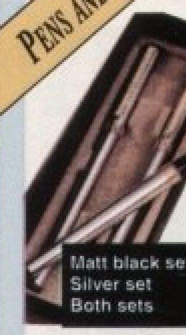
- Save the entire program in memory to disk
- Super powerful trainer mode
- Improved Sprite Editor
- Virus detection
- Burst nibbler
- Save picture and music to disk
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- Slow motion mode
- Many more instant CLI commands
- Restart the program
- Full status reporting
- Powerful picture editor
- Improved debugger commands
- Music sound tracker
- Autofire manager
- Joystick handler
- Diskcoder
- Set map
- Preferences
- Disk monitor
- Improved printer support
- Dos commands
- File requester
- Boot selector

For Amiga A500/A500+/ 1500/2000

A500/500+ £57.95 9512

1500/2000 £67.95 9934

Pens and Rulers



Now you can own the toughest set of pens in the world – for much less than half price!

The three pens that make up the Pentech 200 pen set can stand up to the roughest treatment you can inflict on them – and still give you best possible writing quality. The pens, made to the highest standards or workmanship, are not only robust but are of classic appearandce suitable for all occassions from the home to the Board Room, from the school essay to the best selling novel The three pull-top pens in their presentation case consist of

One cartridge pen
One ballpoint pen
One fine liner

Choose from smart matt black or satin chrome metal finish You can buy with confidence.
Each set comes with a lifetime guarantee.

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Matt black set	9918	£14.95
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Both sets	9920	£20.00

The amazing rolling ruler

Ideal for the house, the office, the school, the workshop or the drawing room, this innovative product allows you to draw vertical and parallel lines without lifting it off the paper. A complete drawing board in one, it will also let you draw any angles from 1 to 359 and circles and arcs with ease. Available in two sizes 22 cm (8") and 30 cm (12"), this great offer gets you both rulers for only £20.00

Rolling ruler £6.50



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Bundle Of Discs

Did you miss out on any of the 1991 Amiga Computing Cover Discs? If so, then now is your chance to obtain our pack of 12 cover discs for last year (January - December 1991).



	Code	Price
January – June 1991	9840	£9.00
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January – Dec 1991	9839	£15.00

£9.00 – £15.00

Fun School

Fun School Special Programs

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(for over 5 years)
– from the makers of Fun School, is designed to allow children to exercise their creative talents – with a practical bias. Contains 6 exciting modules to express your creativity!
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6 Fun, Colourful and entertaining modules designed to keep children enthralled for hours. The exercises, which cover all the basic skills, are presented in a user-friendly and encouraging manner with rewards to keep the child amused while they learn.
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(for ages 7-13)
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£19.95

Phazer Gun

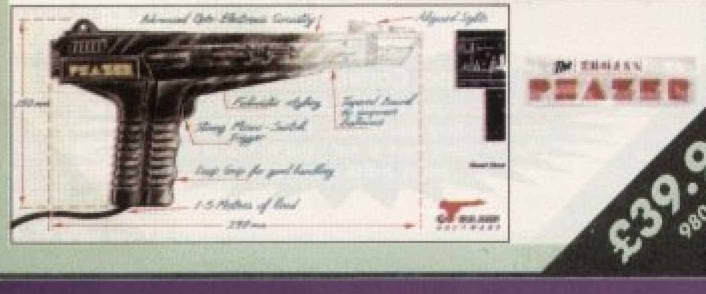
The TROJAN PHAZER GUN

The Trofan Phazer gun opens up a whole new phase of computer entertainment. This advanced light phazer presents a challenge of skill and accuracy for Amiga gameplayers of all ages. The pack includes two free games, Obital Destroyer and Skeetshoot, which will test your shooting skills to the extreme, and a full manual

Advanced features of the Trojan Phazer include:

- *Opto-electric circuitry to give excellent accuracy*
- *Plugs into the Amiga joystick port*
- *Long (1.5 metre) lead*
- *Comfortable band grip*

	Code	Price
Phazer Gun	9802	£39.95
Aliex	9807	£9.95
Enforcer	9806	£9.95
Firestar	9823	£9.95



£39.95 9802

Xmas Bargains

Christmas Bargain Box

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Art Tutor	£14.95	9927
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Fun School 3 5-7	£15.95	9810
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Chess Simulator	£10.00	9932
Welltris	£10.00	9933
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Lockable disc Box (holds 100)	£9.95	9827
Quartet	£19.95	9808

Only while stocks last

HUGE PROFESSIONAL

A complete program for producing icons, sprites, brushes and bobs.

Features:

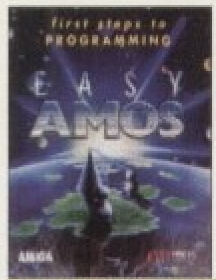
- Supported formats: Image (C& ASM), Sprite (C & ASM), Brush (ILBM), Bob (Amiga Basic) and icons (Workbench).
- Full conversion ability between all supported formats
- Icon editor built in, enabling full icon properties modification
- Functional & user friendly interface, keyboards shortcuts
- Complete user control over display mode & palette
- Advanced drawing capabilities, including 6 drawing tools, flood fill & basic dithering technique
- Font support, palette control & source code palette
- Bitmap editor capabilities, including cut/paste, mirror & rotator and 2 pages for drawing
- Advanced zoom concept, featuring custom magnification trailer zoom & co-ordinates display



£17.95 9855

EASY AMOS

Bring Your Amiga to Life!



Have you ever dreamed of making your Amiga really work for you? Or wanted to harness to the full its awesome hidden power?Well now you can!

Even if you're a complete beginner, Easy AMOS will propel you into a fascinating new world where you will quickly learn how to:

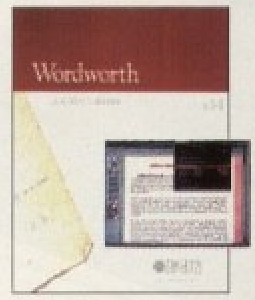
- Produce impressive graphical effects
- Create and animate colourful objects
- Scroll large text across the screen
- Make your Amiga actually talk to you
- Add exciting music to your creations

Code	Product	Price
9834	AMOS The Creator	£34.99
9835	AMOS The Compiler	£19.99
9836	AMOS 3D	£24.95
9837	Bundle of all 3	£74.99

Soon you'll be turning your craziest ideas into reality: Computer art, cartoon animations, home finance, educational software, demos, arcade games, adventures – the list is endless!



WORDWORTH



WORDWORTH is probably the best value word processor available for your Amiga. Written by UK Company Digita (which means using The English Collins based spell checker and thesaurus) it has all the features of more expensive packages:-

- Human Interface Protocol making operation simple and pleasurable
- WYSIWYG display taking advantage of the Amiga's graphic capability
- Incorporate and manipulate external pictures from D Paint for example
- Mix and match enhanced fonts and symbols, Amiga fonts, colourfonts and your printer's fonts. Postscript compatible
- Mailmerge facilities



£95.00 9878

Dreams become reality with WORDWORTH

ADI

Cosmic character crash lands into educational software...

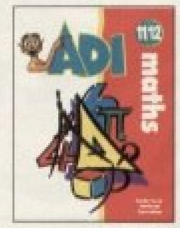
Home study will never be the same again following the launch of ADI for 11 to 14 year olds, from the makers of the best selling Fun School range.

This captivating character entertains and delights students with a range of sophisticated educational programs, endearing himself to them with his lovable personality.

Maths, English and French are taught with the assistance of this knowledgeable extra terrestrial who guides, helps and tutors the student through each progressive subject.

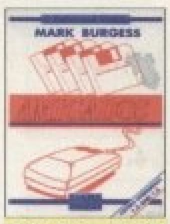
ADI uses his many facial expressions to interact with students, checking their performance at regular intervals, whistling at their progress and going to sleep when bored! He tells jokes to keep them amused, and helps them play games for recreation and reward.

All packages have been carefully aligned to the National Curriculum attainment targets.

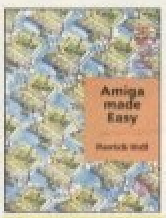


Code	Product	Price
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9518	ADI Maths 12/13 Yrs	£22.99
9515	ADI English 11/12 Yrs	£22.99
9516	ADI English 12/13 Yrs	£22.99

BOOKCASE



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£12.95 9871

RE-INK



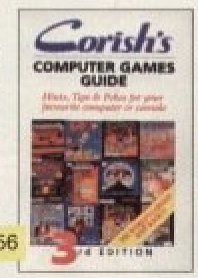
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CORISH'S COMPUTER GAMES GUIDE

This book helps on just about any game you care to name on a wide variety of computer formats. Covers backdoor codes left by the programmers, cheats and tips to get past your opponents, how to skip levels, pokes for infinate lives, time etc, plus many other options.

This is the ultimate hint book with:

- In excess of 750 pages
- In excess of 1,250 games
- In excess of 200 adventures
- More than 12,000 Hints, Tips & Pokes!



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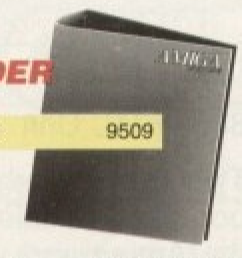


May 1992 - October 1992 + 3.5in disc	£18.00	9899

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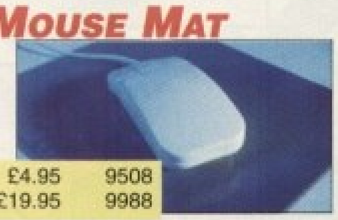
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RENDALE 8802 £139 –

The Rendale range of Amiga Genlocks begins with the 8802. This is a Genlock, which, when attached to an Amiga computer and a suitable video system, will allow you to mix video and computer graphics. It offers all the functions that you need, such as:
* RGB feed through, allowing for a preview monitor.
* High quality output video, which in default mode provides video with overlaid computer graphics.

RENDALE 8802 FMC £178 –

It can be supplied with a device which will allow you to fade between computer graphics and the video source, and also a mode control unit so that you can move between Amiga only, video only, background mode and keyhole modes 1 & 2.

RENDALE SUPER-8802 £499 –

The Rendale Super-8802 is a development of the basic 8802 unit, it performs the same functions, but has the added capability of also working with Super-VHS signals. The unit will allow the user to cross fade between the Amiga and video signal. In addition, some basic wipe patterns are provided, and also a fade to black option. Mode control is also provided via hardware.

NEW! RENDALE FMC £45–fitted

8802 FMC Unit

This is a brand new piece of kit which will improve the capabilities of the popular Rendale 8802 Genlock. This unit allows you to cross fade between the Amiga and video signals, so that you can gently fade computer titles in and out. Also, the ability to switch between the various modes offered by the 8802 is provided. The required mode is selected by a push switch, giving smooth, flicker free transformations.

The FMC unit does need to be soldered into the 8802, we can do this at our factory if required.

8802 UPGRADES £45 – £400 –

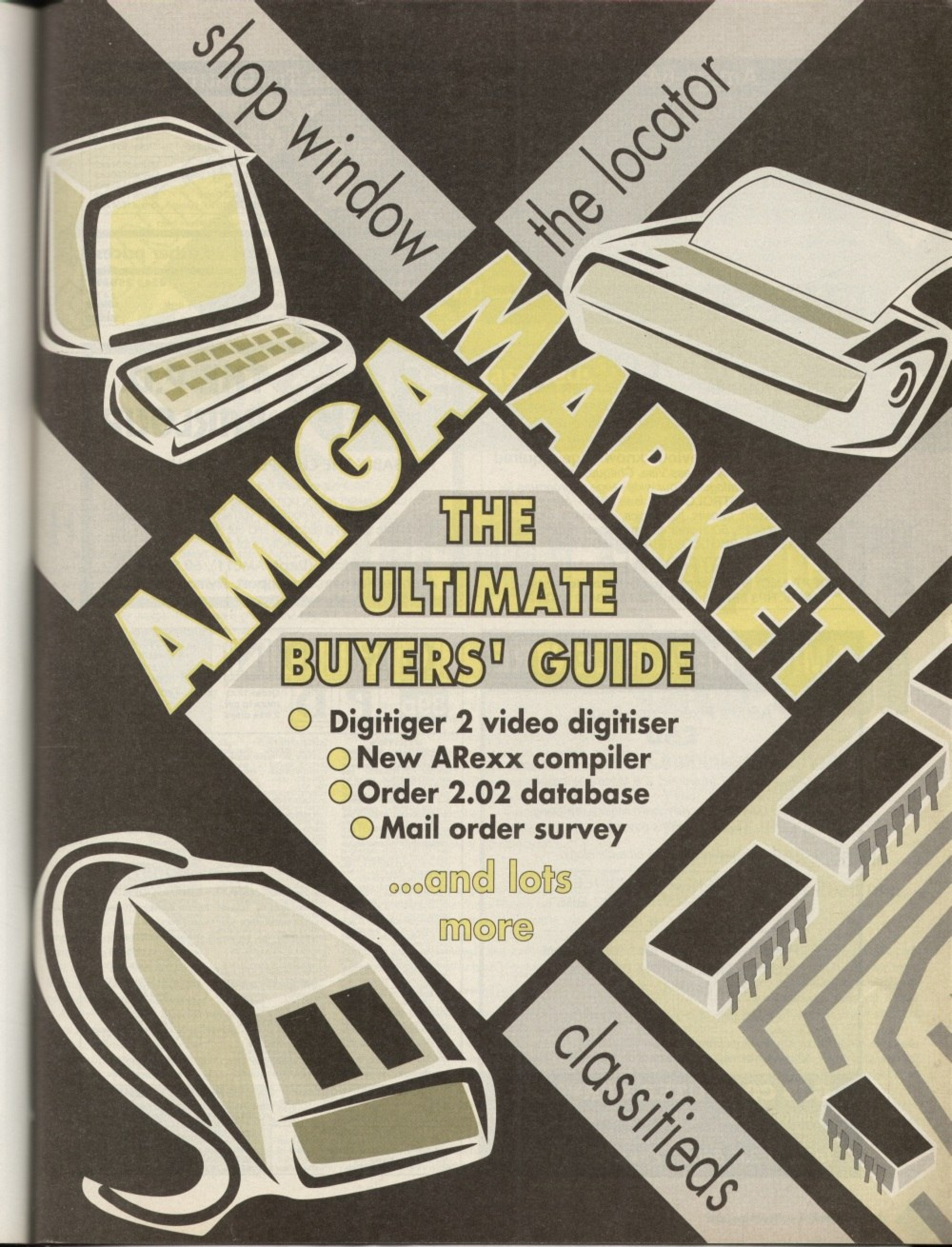
UPGRADE PATHS

Rendale Genlocks are designed to be flexible, and the ability of your Genlock to grow with your system was deemed to be of paramount importance in our design process.

As a consequence, existing 8802 users can follow one of two upgrade paths. The fade and mode control unit (FMC unit) can be purchased independently, and fitted to your 8802 genlock by our engineer. We would only require your unit for around two days.

The other upgrade path is the move from a purely composite 8802 to the Super-8802. This can also be done simply, although we do have to perform the upgrade work at our factory. We would only require your unit for around two days.

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Amiga-64-Link

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- C64 Not required

Connects C64 printers to the Amiga

- Supports MPS, DPS, VIC, Star, Brother, Seikosha & Citizen printers
- Graphics output on dot-matrix printers
- Works with all software

Transfers C64 disk files to the Amiga

- File transfer programs
- Read/Write text, binary & program files

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Star LC200 Black	3.00	2.85	2.65
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CONTENTS

Turning computers into cash

Combining your hobby with your job could transform your work into a hitherto unimagined pleasurable experience. How? Read on...

Have you ever wondered about turning your computing hobby into a wage-paying career? I'm not talking about becoming a programmer, but instead working for a dealer as a sales, support or purchasing capacity.

Believe it or not, even in the midst of this recession, many dealers and computers firms need people with a knowledge of the Amiga. The Amiga is after all the best selling home computer currently available in the UK, as such there are a great many firms looking for such people.

From your point of view, having a job that you enjoy is also more rewarding and fulfilling – rather than a dull office job – and in some cases can also be financially advantageous.

Looking through the pages of *AC* it's obvious that there is no shortage of dealers selling our favourite computer. As such it should be easy to find a fairly local company that you can try for.

More importantly, from time to time the bigger companies will advertise for staff - although this approach does have the disadvantage that a lot of people will probably try for the positions.

Tentative

Alternatively, if you purchased your Amiga from a local dealer then you may know one of the staff or managers. Depending on how well you know these staff, make a few tentative enquiries as to whether there are any positions currently available or coming up.

If so, get them to put you forward on your behalf. Internal references are often given preferential treatment, particularly in smaller companies.

Another possibility is that you can talk to some of the more specialised employment agencies working in the leisure computer industry.

Two such companies worth trying are Answers Recruitment at Hazelwood Road, Northampton NN1 1LN, and Key Resources at 5 Orton Enterprise Centre, Bakewell Road, Orton Southgate, Peterborough PE2 6XU.

You can either request a specific position or leave this choice to the company. There are many different types job within a local dealer – sales assistant, customer support, purchasing etc – but you should be honest with yourself as to the type of job your own knowledge warrants.

You can't for example expect to work in the customer support department helping users like yourself if you only have a basic knowledge of the Amiga!

Enclosed with the letter should be your CV. Both of these documents should be short but factual – pages and pages of text that take ages to read can be more harmful to your future career than a lack of experience.

Remember the reader will be a busy person, using five pages to say what could have been said in a couple of sentences will annoy them and only antagonise them.

Your CV should go into detail about your computing experience, but don't skimp on other areas such as your qualifications.

Note how I said computing experience rather than Amiga experience. Although your expertise maybe only be with the Amiga, the Amiga will not last forever, and such companies will be looking for versatility and a general knowledge of computers. It's highly unlikely that the company only stocks Amigas and you'll almost certainly end up working with other types of computer.

Generalising

So instead of saying you have extensive knowledge of ProWrite or PageStream (Amiga specific applications) put down "word processing and DTP skills."

These packages are wordprocessors and desktop publishing packages so you're not lying. Obviously if you have experience of other computer systems, even better.

Having written your these two documents you should send them to the company in question. Call first to find out who the letter should be addressed to, every firm will have someone who is responsible their personal.

Hopefully you'll be asked to go for an interview. Interview procedures vary greatly depending on the company in question. Again while you should obviously try to emphasise your knowledge you should not lie or exaggerate to the extent that you cannot back your claims up. Answer all questions honestly and where possible appear confident and authoritative.

Once the interview is over and you've left the companies premises there is not a lot more you can do until you next hear from them. You'll either be offered a contract or turned down.

If you make it, congratulations – you've made it to the first rung of the ladder in a career of computing. If you aren't offered a position, don't get disheartened. There are many other vacancies around and every time you miss out your chances improve for the next time around - keep trying!

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Our monthly guide to new Amiga products

DigiTiger

Last year, while wandering around the Ami-Expo in Berlin, a striped box caught my eye. Curious, I looked closer and came face to face with DigiTiger I, a German contender for king of the digitiser jungle.

Now I've had an extensive play with the new DigiTiger 2 I thought you may be interested in hearing if it's worth roaring about.

As digitisers go, DigiTiger isn't the most compact you'll find, resembling somewhat a bag of sugar with knobs on. It connects to the Amiga's parallel port via a generous length of cable and composite video is fed through a phono connector at the rear of the unit and, as it is externally powered, A500 or 600 owners who are pushing their power supplies to the limit need not worry about burning out their precious kit.

Tute claim that DigiTiger is a speed merchant, "the fastest slow-scan digitiser that money can buy", and I found no reason to argue, having compared it with a standard Digi-View and found DigiTiger to be at least twice as fast all round.

As well as this, it produces results which are, in many cases, superior to NewTek's daddy of all digitisers. I reckon that it would beat DCTV's digitiser to the line as well.

Adjustments

Through DigiTiger's combination of hardware and software a wide range of adjustments can be made, as the signal can be processed via the front-panel controls for colour, brightness and contrast before it is digitised, and further tweaking can be made from software, post-grab.

By manipulating the hardware controls, line art and other effects can also be obtained quite easily. A fourth knob, marked Syn, is used to overcome synchronisation problems which may be present with certain VTRs. Unlike many digitisers, DigiTiger has a preview mode which enables the incoming video to be seen in lo-res black and white directly on the Amiga's monitor, making framing and focusing a cinch.

Once the software is set up, selecting one of the eight preset screen sizes, which range from lo-res 320 x 256 to 704 x 560 hi-res overscan, and then choosing the digitising method, causes a video image to be grabbed.

Unlike other digitisers, the number of colours is determined after grabbing, and according to the chosen resolution, with HAM providing the largest number of colours, though at the expense of horizontal resolution.

Of the six methods of digitising available, the most useful are undoubtedly Black and White, Colour Manual and Colour Auto, with the self-explanatory Antique and Pseudo-Colour being little more than novelties, while Test is lo-res mono only. Handily, DigiTiger also contains a colour splitter, which means that when Colour Auto is selected, an incoming colour signal will automatically be split into the red, green and blue components required for digitising, thus obviating the need for the separate splitter required by some other digitisers in this price range.

But if you still use a black and white camera with colour filters, Colour Manual allows you to rotate the filter before making the next pass. No clues as to what Black and White is for.

After grabbing an image, DigiTiger's Colour Mixture requester pops up with choices for the number of colours (1 to 6 bitplanes), relative R, G and B levels, HAM sharpness (to reduce HAM fringing artefacts) and various Palette functions, one of which is to render each image with a locked palette

This means that they will play back correctly when animated with DPaint. This is the last stage and once the grab is to your liking it can be saved for posterity on disk.

Used in anger, I found DigiTiger to perform well, once I had spent some time getting the front panel knobs set up just right for my system.



Dependant

By testing with a black and white camera, an S-VHS camcorder and a VHS deck I can report that the results were generally very good, though of course they will always be dependent on the quality of the video feed.

As DigiTiger is a slow-scan digitiser any grabbing from tape must be done with a VCR capable of a rock-solid pause, or the grab will have the jitters.

In a shoot out with Digi-View, DigiTiger was the clear winner for speed, quality and ease of use, though in the picture processing stakes Digi-View is still the boss.

Although the manual is entirely in German, the saving grace is that the software is available in an easily understood English version, so there really isn't much cause for concern.

Anyone at all familiar with Amiga software will have no trouble with DigiTiger's standard pull-down menu, point and click interface.

DigiTiger is compatible with all Amigas and most turbo cards. 1Mb RAM or more is recommended.

Supplier: Klaus D Tute,
Soft-, Art-und Hardware,
Kirchroder Str. 49D, 3000 Hannover 61
Phone: 010 49 0511 551701
Price: approx £200

● *Any distributors reading may be interested to know that Tute is currently looking for a UK distributor for DigiTiger*

Shop Window

Order v2

The Amiga database market couldn't be described as the most buoyant in the productivity sector, and for long there have been only a few packages competing for a fairly small market. It is therefore the first requirement of a new database that it offer something new.

South Hams Software's Order is a relational database with few frills which uses an approach more often associated with PC packages in that the program creates projects containing as many databases as the user likes.

Similarly, reports and forms are generated within the same project and attached to a database so that a project can develop into a bit of a monster.

It is an approach not found in the other Amiga databases presently doing the rounds, and makes Order an ideal choice for manipulating massive amounts of disparate data.

The Order user will find invaluable the facility to create many different forms to vary the way data is entered, and reports to provide a range of display and printing options.

The program is designed as a collection of modules to control the creation and editing of the project components, all of which are accessed from a main menu screen.

This tends to slow down operation, especially when swapping from one module to another as a complete module must then be loaded from disk.

Things never get too pedestrian, however, and working from a hard drive will reduce delays considerably.

X-head

One other niggle is that the 200-page manual will be required reading for anyone not already familiar with this particular type of database package.

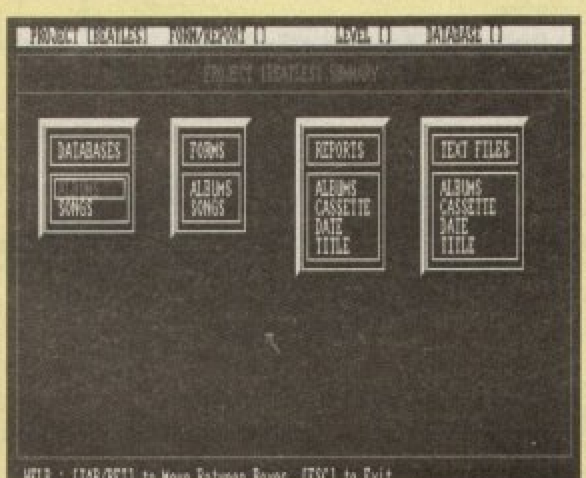
The seasoned user will pick up most of the main points after about 30 minutes, but beginners might struggle for a while.

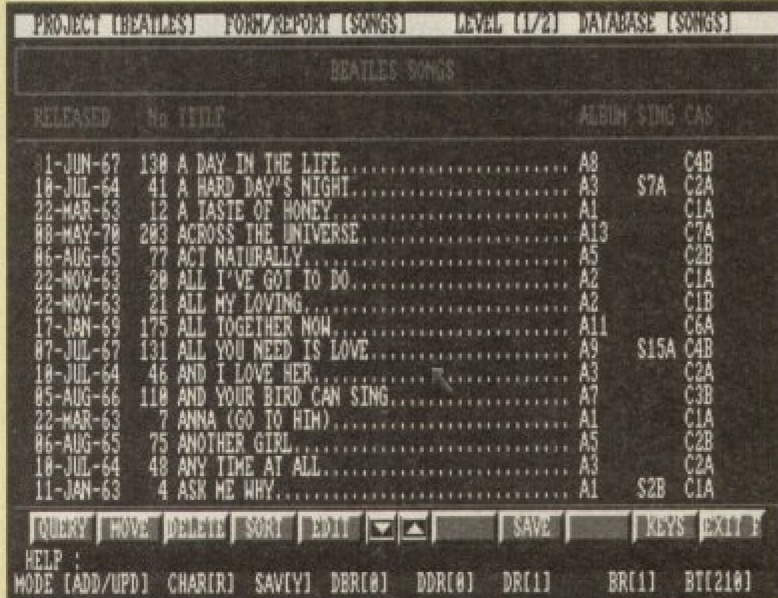
In particular, the manual tends to take a lot for granted, and assumes that the user is already comfortable with the terminology. The result is often a great deal of head-scratching.

Once its layout and general principles have been mastered, Order is a logical and relatively straightforward package, and with a bit of use it soon develops into a flexible tool. The modular approach sees to this.

As projects and databases are treated separately, the user can decide to create a range of projects with one or two databases within each, or can stick with one large project stuffed with data.

For example, separate projects might be labelled Videos, Tapes, and Records, or alternatively one large Collections project might be designed to contain three databases with these names.





When the structure of the project has been decided upon, any number of reports within each database can be applied to the data to enable a variety of printout options.

The Cassettes database would have a form used for printing cassette box labels, one for listing every cassette by title, and perhaps a full-blown song-by-song list cross-indexed to the cassette number on which the songs can be found.

There's plenty of choice, and creating reports is made easy by the reports editor. By choosing to edit or create a report's format, the user just picks up a data field using the mouse and drags it to a new location in much the same way as Prodata users create layouts.

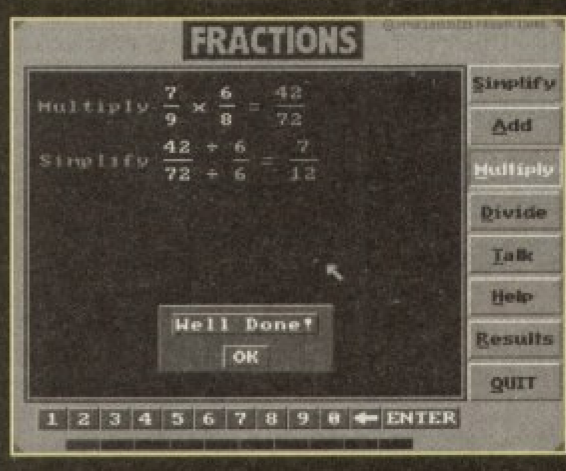
This means that if a specific printing format is required, it is a simple task to knock one together. Not as easy or as friendly as the layout creation process in Prodata, perhaps, but perfectly adequate and accessible to anyone who has used a database before. Order's key field and query facilities will be the most troublesome to new users, but can both be very powerful tools. Queries – searches to you and me – can be made from any level of a database, even the lowest form level at which much of the data may not be on-screen, and key fields allow the linking of data across different forms, removing the need to type in the same data every time a new form is created.

Searches are fast and efficient, even when asked to find a single piece of data from hundreds of records, and the extensive support for wildcards makes rooting through a mass of data for non-specific information a breeze.

Beginners or those with simple data storage needs will probably steer clear of Order, but those with demanding needs, or who have found some of the existing packages a little too linear will find Order the perfect tool.

Supplier: South Hams Software
Phone: 0752 880289
Price: £24.95

Fractions!



Lascelles Productions of New Zealand, responsible for the excellent Back to Basics program of a couple of years ago, have turned their attention to basic mathematics for their latest educational release.

Fractions!, aimed at the 7 to 14-year age group and covering National Curriculum levels 1 to 4, is a no-nonsense learning tool which concentrates entirely on adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing fractions, and skips the games and animations found in most modern educational packages.

The program has a simple look and feel, based on a blackboard on which the sums appear, and makes a single concession to sound in the form of the Amiga speech device, which will read aloud all program instructions.

It is not the most inspiring of products, nor one which would hold an unsupervised child's attention for long, but for basic maths instruction it would suit the parent who wanted to get on with teaching his or her child and leave the games till later.

A record is kept of scores gained in each of the four types of sum, and this can be printed as a permanent record of the child's achievement. There is also a help function, but the average eight-year-old, faced with a help screen which uses words like "dividend" and "divisor" will find precious little to clear up any confusion.

Fractions! is a decent stab at good old back to basics maths, and works fine with supervision. It is, however, a little lacking when compared to more visually and aurally appealing packages such as the Fun School and Henrietta programs, both of which manage the same amount of instruction with infinitely more pzazz!.

Supplier: Lascelles Productions
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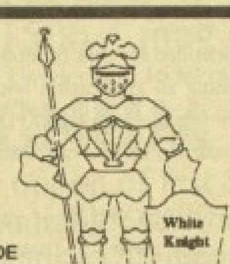
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REXXPLUS compiler

The expanding arena of ARexx support has recently shown some very good software and one of the more interesting new arrivals is the REXXPLUS compiler from the Dineen Edwards Group. This product will compile ARexx scripts into executables that can be run directly by AmigaDOS.

Now, do not imagine that this compiler produces extremely fast code as, for instance, C does. What it does produce is very well optimised ARexx code, which will satisfy the requirements of users who have come to like the convenience of ARexx, but need more execution speed.

In the applications I tested I saw speed increases of two to five times, and in special cases, much more than this would be possible.

No doubt, one of REXXPLUS's main uses will be the speeding up of scripts that control other programs. ARexx power users who need to link high-end applications, especially where calculation is involved, will find that the compiler makes the previously slow interprogram connections much faster.

Further, the compiled programs are "pure", so they can be made resident in memory, and do not have to be loaded up every time they are called.

Trivial

On the downside, compiled programs carry a large overhead, and even small scripts compile to about 30k. You should also note that the compiler works better on more involved scripts, and trivial scripts will generally have insignificant speed-ups.

Compiler support is also provided for calls to Intuition and other shared libraries. Writing an application with a full Intuition interface is certainly feasible with REXXPLUS. The compiled code is "blink" compatible so you can easily use it with most other languages.

You can call C routines from REXXPLUS, or you could write part of your program – the parsing and interprocess communication bits – in REXXPLUS, and the rest in C (or any other compiled language).

The program is compatible with both Workbench 1.3 and 2.x . At least 1Mb of RAM is recommended and as always, a hard disk is desirable. ARexx, of course, must already be present on the system.

An installation script is provided, which, as well as copying all the necessary files, also adds a few lines to your startup-sequence. By the way, this is a good example of ARexx at work – much easier than AmigaDOS! A new logical directory, RPDIR:, is created and replaces rexx:.



The reason for the alterations is that the REXXPLUS environment "intercepts" the normal operation of ARexx and creates a new task to handle ARexx calls. This task now carries the REXX and ARexx ports, communicating with the resident process via two new ports.

If this sounds somewhat precarious, rest assured that it is not. One of the really striking things about the program is the elegance and robustness of the interface.

All the programs tested ran and communicated together with no snags whatsoever. These included executables, normal rx'ed macros, rx'ed executables, and macros called from other programs.

Compiling is easy – the Intuition interface will even allow a beginner to compile a script with just a couple of mouse-clicks, although there are numerous options for the more experienced user.

The compilation times themselves – while not exactly greased lightning – were fast enough not to cause any frustration. All sorts of listings can be generated to aid the debugging process. The REXXPLUS compiler provides some additional useful commands to the standard ARexx language definition. These include octal conversion and line processing routines. Further, all calls to rexxsupport.library and to the transcendental math functions can be considered as built-in functions.

The documentation is excellent. One thing that you cannot use in compiled code however, is the Interpret instruction. A few of the tracing options are also missing.

Overall this is a very good product, especially when you consider the work required to get this kind of thing right. The authors have got it right, though, and I believe it will see many improvements in the future.

However, I think that the program would be better served by a change in the licensing agreement, which currently requires special permission from DEG to distribute programs created with it.

I would certainly not recommend it to a beginner looking for their first compiler – it is a bit too specialised for that – but serious ARexx users, and programmers who rely on ARexx environments, will be more than pleased with it. It could well be a future Amiga classic.

Speedy handling

REXXPLUS's method of handling support libraries gives it much of its speed. Special compiler libraries are provided for each support library and are used at compile time to eliminate the time-consuming interpreter cycle of searching the library list, opening and closing the library and so on.

All the function calls are resolved at compile time, allowing direct access when they are run. A similar concept is used for accessing ports. A program that required extensive mathematical calculation speeded up by a most welcome six times.

Special compiler libraries are also provided for the major freely distributable support libraries that allow Amiga-specific system calls.

One or two of these have graphics compatibility clashes with Workbench 2.0, but the excellent APIG.library and rxgen.library, which are also supported, are more than enough to allow anything in the system to be accessed.

Dineen Edwards Group offer to make special libraries available for other support libraries and function hosts.

Supplier:
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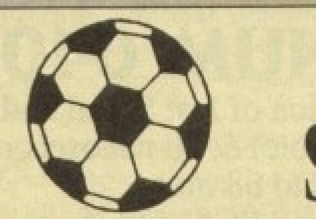
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WING-BACKS IN A SOCCER MANAGEMENT GAME?



SOCCER SUPREMO

In the traditional number-juggling soccer management game wing-backs, sweepers, formations, styles, tactics are, at best, cosmetic, at worst, meaningless. The unique match simulation at the heart of Soccer Supremo restores all these and more, allowing genuine control over team performance. In addition to the visual feedback on your team, this match allows substitutions, tactical positional changes and workrate instructions to individual players which then influence the flow of the match. The increased realism and control transforms the supreme, but childish, gameplay of the traditional game into a compulsive simulation.

AN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT GAME

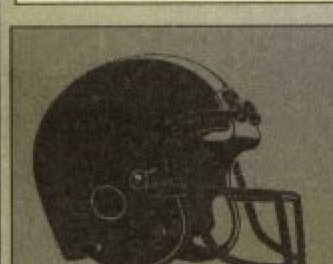
Yet another England manager has learnt the hard way that controlling an international squad is a very different ballgame to club management. Every match is a cup-tie and every team-selection and result is picked apart by a voracious press. The pressure to succeed is incredible.
Soccer Supremo puts you in charge of a European national squad preparing for the European Nations Cup qualifiers. You have an initial four year contract that may be extended to six or eight years, or reduced to two, as results dictate. You'll be expected to qualify for the Finals, then put up a show against the best European teams. But this is just preparation for the big one: The World Cup!
Customisation. The game will allow you to take the European nation of your choice and you will be allocated an initial squad of 16 players. You can introduce a further 34 players, making 50 in all, whose names and skills (but not levels) you can define yourself. These players are introduced gradually as you discover the weaknesses in your squad and also to create the balance of skills that match your style of play. The original 16 players can be defined in the same way using the EDIT program (free with the game) if you wish, as well as the teams that will make up the opposition.

3D, 22 MAN MATCH DISPLAY

continuous display of:
O'LL, ATT/MID/DEF POSSESSION STATS
IND. PLAYER ACTIVITY STATS
PLAYER FATIGUE/FITNESS STATS
STATE-OF-THE-GAME FIGURES
PLAYER-WITH-THE-BALL INFORMATION
intermittent messages on:
FOULS, INJURIES, GOALS, SCORERS, PENALTIES, SUBSTITUTIONS, TACTICS

IN MATCH TACTICAL MOVES

SUBSTITUTIONS
POSITIONAL CHANGES
OVERALL WORKRATE
IND. PLAYER WORKRATE



HEAD COACH V3

"From my point of view, the game has kept me sitting up at nights and through holidays and weekends for up to 12 hours at a stretch, with miniscule breaks for food and other necessities . . . It is a game I have no hesitation in recommending to anyone with even the slightest interest in American Football." - *Atari User review.*

HEADCOACH V3 has been described as "the best game ever put onto a computer". It is the complete American Football game, a multi season epic with the very best strategic elements of the real thing. You will call the plays, devise the gameplans and develop the team.

Use the first season (2 pre-season games, 16 regular season games, and the play-offs) to discover your 45 man squad of players. Then exploit the college draft to improve the team and expand your gameplay to beat the very best the NFL can throw at you.

Players will age and teams will fade (a player will last about 6 seasons), but you will stay and rebuild...

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The great *Amiga Market* mail order survey

Have you ever felt dissatisfied with a mail order company's service, or were so pleased you thought you'd been given special treatment? Now's your chance to tell *Amiga Market* who the good guys and the bad guys are!

Please return this survey to:
M.O.S.
Amiga Computing,
Europa HousE, AdlingtonPark,
Macclesfield SK10 4NP

The following survey, as it requests specific information about mail order companies, has been designed with impartiality in mind, and we urge anyone who completes it to bear in mind that by doing so they are making a public statement about an issue which affects the livelihoods of businesses up and down the country. This is the first attempt of its kind in an Amiga magazine to look at the mail order industry, so please try to answer with forethought and balance.

The results of this survey will be printed in a forthcoming *Amiga Market*.

PART 1: How often, how much?

1. How often in the last year have you ordered goods from a computer mail order company?
   - a. Once .... ❑
   - b. From two to four times .... ❑
   - c. Five or more times .... ❑

2. Please state the method of payment you most often use
   - a. Credit card telephone order .... ❑
   - b. Written order with cheque .... ❑
   - c. Written order with postal order .... ❑
   - d. Written order with cash .... ❑

3. What has been the average delivery time?
   - a. One to three days .... ❑
   - b. Four to seven days .... ❑
   - c. Up to two weeks .... ❑
   - d. Over two weeks .... ❑

4. What was the longest delivery time? (please state)

   ....

5. What was the shortest delivery time? (please state)

   ....

PART 2: Delivery

6. Have you ever ordered goods, paid for them, then not received them?
   - Yes .... ❑
   - No .... ❑

If Yes, please state how many times this has happened to you

....

7. If so, please outline what steps you took (if any) to retrieve your money or obtain your ordered goods

   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

8. Have you ever contacted any of the following organisations with regard to bad mail order service?
   - a. The magazine in which you saw the advertisement .... ❑
   - b. The local Trading Standards Office .... ❑
   - c. The police .... ❑
   - d. Your solicitor .... ❑

9. How many times have you received such good service that you contacted the company to congratulate them?
   - a. Never .... ❑
   - b. Once .... ❑
   - c. Two to four times .... ❑
   - d. Five or more times .... ❑

10. How many times has a genuine mistake been made, then promptly and efficiently been put right?

    ....

PART 3: After-sales service

11. Have you ever received goods which you subsequently found to be faulty? Please state how often
    - a. Never (skip to Part 4: Technical Support) .... ❑
    - b. Once .... ❑
    - c. Two to four times .... ❑
    - d. Five or more times .... ❑

12. Was damage caused in transit or was the fault with the goods themselves?
    - a. Damage inflicted in transit .... ❑
    - b. Goods were faulty .... ❑

13. On a scale of one to ten, please rate how willing the company which supplied the goods was to replace them

    ....

14. On a scale of one to ten, please state how willing the company who supplied the goods was to offer a refund

    ....

15. How long did it take for a replacement/refund to reach you?
    - a. One to three days .... ❑
    - b. Four to seven days .... ❑
    - c. Up to two weeks .... ❑
    - d. Two weeks or more .... ❑

PART 4: Technical support

16. Have you ever purchased a piece of software or hardware so complex that after-sales technical support could reasonably be expected?
    - Yes .... ❑
    - No .... ❑

17. How often have you been forced to ask a mail order firm for technical support?
    - a. Never (skip to Part 5: Your preferences) .... ❑
    - b. Once or twice .... ❑
    - c. Three or more times .... ❑

18. On average, how often have you received a satisfactory answer?
    - a. Never .... ❑
    - b. Half the time .... ❑
    - c. All the time .... ❑

19. How often have you been told that the company in question offers no technical support whatsoever?

    ....

20. Do you feel you are entitled to technical support no matter what the price of the goods you purchase?

    ....

PART 5: Your preferences

21. Please rate the following factors on a scale of one to ten according to their importance to your decision to buy from a company from whom you have never before purchased goods:
    - Prices .... ❑
    - Style of advertisement .... ❑
    - Reputation for reliability .... ❑
    - Promise of prompt delivery .... ❑
    - Promise of after sales support .... ❑
    - Recommendation of a friend .... ❑
    - Other (please state) ....
    - .... ❑

22. Please rate the following factors on a scale of on to ten according to their importance in your decision to buy something else from a company from whom you have already purchased goods:
    - Prices .... ❑
    - Prompt delivery .... ❑
    - After sales service .... ❑
    - Technical support .... ❑
    - Other (please state) .... ❑

23. Please name the company with whom you have been most pleased in the last year, and state the main reason for your satisfaction:

    ....
    ....

24. Please name the company with whom you have been most annoyed in the last year, and state the main reason for your dissatisfaction:

    ....
    ....

25. Please rate on a scale of one to ten your general feeling of confidence in the computer mail order market:

    ....

Part 6: About you

Name ....

Address ....

....

Phone .... Age ....

A-Z OF VFM

Hard Times

Every month, a selection of some of the best Value For Money hardware bargains to be found in *Amiga Computing*. True at-a-glance shopping for all our readers. Remember – if you are a supplier and you can beat these prices, let us know!

NEXT MONTH

More of your best buys. They don't go in unless you tell us about them, so if you see a better buy, or can beat those shown, get on the phone to:

Amiga Market VFM
0625 878888

HARD DRIVES

Make	Capacity	RAM upgrades	Compatibility	Game switch	Thru-port	PSU	RRP	AC price
Trilogic								
Dataflyer	45	Y	500/500+	N	N	N	259.99	
Dataflyer	45	Y	500/2000	N	N	N	229.99	
Dataflyer	105	Y	500/500+	N	N	N	389.99	
Dataflyer	105	Y	500/2000	N	N	N	359.99	
Hawkwell Electronics								
GVP	52	Y	500E+	Y	Y	Y	399.95	379.95
Magneto Optical	128	-	A500	N	N	Y	1,199	1,150
Magneto Optical	128	-	1500/2000	N	N	N	999	950
A600Internal	40	-	A600	N	N	N	375	350
Supra 500xp	52	suppl. with 1Mb	A500	-	Y	Y	380	375
Gasteiner								
Gasteiner	52	Y	All	Y	Y	Y		349
Gasteiner	105	Y	All	Y	Y	Y		599
Audition Computers								
GVP	105	Y	A500+	Y	Y	Y	-	439.99
Delta Pl Software								
Supra Wordsync	52	N	-	-	Y	-	-	239
Supra Wordsync	105	N	-	-	Y	-	-	379
GVP HC8 A2000	52	Y	-	-	-	-	-	279
GVP HC8 A2000	120	Y	-	-	-	-	-	419
GVP HD8 A500	52	Y	-	-	-	-	-	349
GVP HD8 A500	120	Y	-	Y	-	Y	-	469
ADD								
Addhard	45	Y	Y	N	y	N	265	265
Addhard	70	Y	Y	N	Y	N	345	345
Addhard	105	Y	Y	N	Y	N	395	395
Addhard	205	Y	Y	N	Y	N	495	495

A-Z OF VFM

RAM BOARDS

Make	Capacity	On/off switch	Chip upgrade	Internal /external	Compatibility	RRP	AC price
Trilogic							
Trilogic	1Mb	N	Y	Int	500+	49.99	39.99
Baseboard	0.5-4Mb	N	Y	Int	500/500+		79.99 – 199.99
Dataflyer RAM	1-8Mb	N	Y	Int	1500/2000		89.99 Unpopulated
Hawkwell Electronics							
Virgo v500	0.5Mb	Y	Y	Int	500	-	24.95
Virgo v500+Clk	0.5Mb	Y	Y	Int	500	-	29.95
Power PCR1.5	1.5Mb	Y	Y	Int	500	99.95	89.95
Virago V4000	4Mb	Y	Y	Int	500	198	198
Power 16chip	0.5Mb	Y	Y	Int	500	24.95	19.95
Power 16chip+clock	0.5Mb	Y	Y	Int	500	29.95	24.95
Power 1.5Mb	1.5Mb	Y	Y	Int	500	85	79.95
Power 1.5Mb	1.5Mb	Y	Y	Int	500	89.95	69.95
Analogic Computers							
ADD	A500/0.5Mb+clk	Y	Y	Ext	100	-	24.95
ADD	A500/0.5Mb	N	Y	Ext	100	-	34.95
ADD	A500/1Mb	N	Y	Ext	100	-	54.95
Power Computing							
Power	A500/0.5Mb+clk	Y	Y	Int	500	29	-
Power	A500/0.5Mb	Y	Y	Int	500	24	-
Power	A500/+/0.5Mb+clk	Y	N	Int	500	24	-
Power	A500/+/0.5Mb	Y	N	Int	500	19	-
Power	A500/1.5Mb	N	Y	Int	500	79	-
Power	A500/1 Mb	N	Y	Int	500	49	-
Power	A500/1Mb	N	Y	Int	500	39	-
Power	A500/8Mb	N	Y	Int	500	2Mb 129 4Mb 189 8Mb 299	
Power	A500/2Mb	N	Y	Ext	500	99.95	
	With Clock1Mb	-	-	Trap	A600	49	
	Without Clock1Mb	-	-	Trap	A600	45	
Delta PL Software							
Supra Ram 2000	2-8Mb	N	N	Int	-	149	
Supra Ram 500rx	2-8Mb	Y	-	Ext	-	149	
Pheonix A600	-	-	Trap		-	-	
Gasteiner							
Alfa Data	0.5Mb	Y	N	Int	A500	29.95	26
Alfa Data	2.0Mb	Y	1Mb	Int	A500	149	99
MemoryMaster	8Mb	-	-		Int	A500	129
Audition							
A600Ram Ex1	Mb	N	Y	Trap	A600	55	
Phoenix							
A500+	1Mb	-	-	-			39.99
A500 Keybd ROM sharer	-	-	-				34.99
A500 ROM Sharer	-	-	-				24.99
Amiga 2.04 upgrade	-	-	-				79.99

Classifieds

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◆ Wanted Amiga contacts send list disks to Dave Gamble 23 Dominion Road Gleinfield Leicester LE3 8FD
◆ Wanted S/M City Prefer latest version if possible Tel Taff 01049 5404 71373 Evenings
◆ Amiga PD swap or sell 75p Disk with games Peter 65 Meadowside, Lyford Surrey RH7 6BY
◆ Any Amiga Contacts Tel Alex 0273 585894. After 6 pm.
◆ C128 Computer 1541 SDisk Drive MPS 801 Printer and all software £350. Tel Nick 021 551 0451/083 533951
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◆ Reliable P.D Contacts wanted send list to Neil Davis 26 Station Road Honley Huddds HD7 2ll
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◆ The Manager – duplicate, bought in error will sell for £18 Including postage box unopened Kevin Tel 0495 762105
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◆ A500 and software as new worth over £750 New £450 Tel 0732 884151
◆ Amiga 500 (old) games enthusiasm seen other to swap games tips help 100% genuine serious Tel 081 598 1016
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◆ Amiga friends wanted national and international write to Paul 51 Balliol Road Buckland Portsmouth Hants England Tel 652498
◆ 30 Amiga games over year old all boxed originals £1.50 to £5 SAE 168 Stonly Stanton Road Coventry
◆ Amiga contacts still wanted 100% reply write to Keith "H" 18 Westbury Road, Penhill, Swindon Wilts SN2 5DA
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◆ Wanted Amiga 3D contacts: tricks objects textures and so on
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◆ A500P A590 3 MEG Total Ram with games software and books £500 O.N.O Tel after 6.00 pm on 021 356 6514
◆ Commodore 1081 colour monitor excellent condition boxed with lead £195 Tel 081-204 4145 (NW9) Robin
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◆ Olivetti DM105 colour printer 9-pin emulates Epson JX80 friction feed manual and cables boxed £100 ONO Tel 0784 258241

◆ A500 types GVP 52MB HD8 3 months old upgrading to 1500 £300 Tel 0420 478849
◆ 1 MB A500 with Philips CM8833 monitor star LC-10 printer games £390 ONO will sell separately Tel 0753 817749
◆ LC10 printer boxed as new under half price £85 Tel 0702 619634 Evenings
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◆ A500 512K internal Amiga memory exp made by Zydec call Peter on Tel 0304 823964 Free postage
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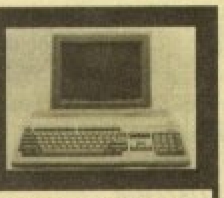
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